

**“Do your whack”: Investigating the needs and experiences
of young men imprisoned in Northern Ireland through the
lens of critical masculinities studies’**

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“I’m a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will” (Antonio Gramsci, a letter from prison, 19 December 1929).

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Abstract

Based on a nine-month ethnographic study of a young offenders' institution in Belfast this thesis explores the needs and experiences of young men imprisoned in Northern Ireland through the lens of critical masculinities studies. The Prison Review Team has described Hydebank, and young adult (aged 18-24) male offenders within, as the “forgotten group in the Northern Ireland prison system” and stated that the level of resources made available to this group are significantly less than for other prisons and prisoners (PRTa, 2011: 70). Moreover, studies exploring the unique nature of masculinities within the Northern Ireland context have identified that young men's masculinities are being constructed in “hostile and dangerous environments” (Ashe and Harland, 2014: 755) and young men are experiencing a “sense of alienation, perceived normality of violence, unwelcomed interactions with paramilitary members and restrictive notions of masculinity” (Harland and McCready, 2014: 1).

The ethnographic research on which this thesis is based pairs methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The unprecedented access gained to the institution provided the researcher with the opportunity to visit Hydebank four times a week over a nine-month period, spending time with the young men in educational classes, vocational training, recreational activities and association times. This facilitated observation into how traditional elements of masculinity such as bravado and machismo play out in a group dynamic, but also provided valuable insight into young men's subjective perspectives of imprisonment uncovering vulnerabilities such as bullying, mental health issues and struggles with substance misuse and addiction, issues young men often do not feel comfortable expressing in a group situation.

The unique access gained to Hydebank, coupled with the strong rapport built between the researcher and the young men, has provided this thesis with rich findings. The findings consider: how elements of post-conflict Northern Ireland society shape masculinities prior to prison; how young men experience institutional power; young men's temporal experiences of prison; and how sources of vulnerability affect young men in prison.

List of abbreviations

B1-5	Beech House Landings 1-5
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BMC	Belfast Metropolitan College
C1-5	Cedar House Landings 1-5
CJINI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CJS	Criminal Justice System
DoJ	Department of Justice
GP	General Practitioner
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons in England and Wales
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
HMPS	Her Majesty's Prison Service
IEPS	Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IRA	Irish Republican Army
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NI	Northern Ireland
NIACRO	Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
PREPS	Progressive Regime and Earned Privileges Scheme
PRT	Prison Review Team
SASPS	School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences
SEHSCT	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
SPAR	Supporting Prisoners at Risk

UDA	Ulster Defence Army
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UUREC	Ulster University Research and Ethics Committee
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWII	World War Two
YOC	Young Offenders Centre

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on the needs and experiences of young men in custody in Northern Ireland (NI), analysing these through the lens of critical masculinities studies. It explores how the environment in a young men's custodial institution influences the construction of masculinity and how expressions of masculinity shape young men's experiences of prison. The primary research for this thesis was conducted over a nine-month period between March and November 2016 in Hydebank Wood Secure College, Belfast (hereafter Hydebank). Hydebank houses young men between the ages of 18 and 24. The site is shared with women prisoners who are held in Ash House, Hydebank Wood Prison. The Prison Review Team's (PRT) (2011a: 70) report labelled Hydebank and the young men imprisoned within as the "forgotten group in the Northern Ireland prison system" and suggested that the level of resources made available to this group were significantly less than for other prisons and prisoners (PRT, 2011a).

As an institution, Hydebank has been deemed an inadequate environment for young men to receive support and motivation to change their behaviour (PRT, 2011a). After severe criticisms highlighted by the PRT (2011a), the Criminal Justice Inspection NI (CJINI) (CJINI, 2013) further criticised the institution, reporting there had been little progress since 2011 and that the prison was largely unsatisfactory as an institution for imprisoning young men. The CJINI (2013: v) highlighted concerns in regards to the overall safety of the prisoners; many of the young men felt victimised by staff or other prisoners, there was an "inertia in developing a robust approach to violence reduction" and no lessons had been learnt from recent deaths in custody. Concerns were also raised in relation to complacent attitudes to health care, self-harm and a drug problem within the institution. Furthermore, it was reported that prisoners spent too long locked in their cells with severe restrictions placed on open-air time (CJINI, 2013).

Previous research has highlighted how the nature of masculinities within NI society is shaped by legacies of the conflict, with young men experiencing a "sense of alienation, perceived normality of violence, unwelcomed interactions with paramilitary members and restrictive notions of masculinity" (Harland and McCready, 2014: 269). Masculinities are being constructed in some of the most

“hostile and dangerous environments” within communities in NI (Ashe and Harland, 2014: 755) and young men are experiencing high levels of “poverty, educational underachievement, and social marginalisation” (Ashe and Harland, 2014: 756). As in other jurisdictions young men in Hydebank have experienced significant social exclusion, including difficulties with regard to educational achievement (an estimated one third have literacy problems and around a half have numeracy problems) as well as low levels of employability and “disappointingly high” (IMB, 2017: 47) recidivism rates. It is estimated that within NI “the reconviction rate for young men is high, between 70% – 80%” (IMB, 2011: 17).

This thesis explores young men’s prison experiences in the context of the diverse sources of marginalisation identified above, including socio-economic and community-based marginalisation and paramilitary victimisation. It examines young men’s experiences against a backdrop of the historical factors that have removed avenues for achieving expressions of territorial and/or protective masculinities, through the decline of traditional paramilitary organisations following the Good Friday Agreement (1998).

The marginalisation of these young men is also evidenced by the lack of research on young men in prison within NI. Research on imprisonment in Northern Ireland in recent years has focused more on the experiences of women (Scruton and Moore, 2005; Roberson and Radford, 2006; Moore and Scruton, 2014; O’Neill, 2011; McNaul, 2015; 2017) and political prisoners and ex-prisoners (McEvoy, 2001; Shirlow and McEvoy, 2008; Dwyer, 2007; 2013). With unprecedented fieldwork access, this research examines the needs and experiences of these “forgotten” (PRT, 2011a: 70) and alienated (Harland and McCready, 2014) young men, exploring how expressions of masculinity are constructed and shaped within the prison environment and how these masculinities in turn affect the prison experience. To achieve this, nine months of ethnographic research were conducted within Hydebank, combining methods of semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The combination of methods facilitated access to both the ‘frontstage’ presentation of masculinities, observing elements of bravado or machismo that are displayed to other prisoners and staff in the group environment; and through the semi-structured interviews, to gain an insight into the ‘backstage’ presentation, the private sense of self held by individuals (Goffman, 1959; Giddens, 1984). The research was granted ethical approval by the Ulster University Research and Ethics

Committee as well as the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) (both approved February 2016).

The remainder of this introductory chapter provides an insight into: the current penal context within NI, masculinity as a concept, what it means to be a young man in NI and an overview of the chapters that make up this thesis.

1.2 The current penal context within Northern Ireland

Hydebank is one of NI's three prisons. Alongside Hydebank, HMP Maghaberry (hereafter Maghaberry) is a high security prison, housing adult men on long-term sentences and remand. In addition, HMP Magilligan (hereafter Magilligan) is a medium/low security prison, housing adult men with under six years left of their sentences to serve and who meet the relevant security classification (DoJNI, 2018). There have been mixed reports into the prisons within NI. In terms of Maghaberry, a recent CJINI (2015) inspection revealed significant failures in the relationship between the institution and senior NIPS managers. The report highlighted that the high security prison was unsafe and unstable for prisoners and staff. Nick Hardwick, then Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons in England and Wales, stated that Maghaberry was in "crisis" and that it was the "most dangerous prison" he had ever been in (cited in BBC, 2015). In contrast, although Magilligan continues to have problems controlling licit and illicit drug use and supply, it was commended by CJINI (2017: 7) saying that the work on going there was "immensely encouraging".

Through the Hillsborough Agreement (2010), the UK parliament devolved justice powers to the NI Assembly. In conjunction with the devolution of justice, a commitment was made to review the management, oversight and conditions of prisons within NI. The review, conducted by the PRT (2011) produced two reports (PRT, 2011a; PRT, 2011b), which outlined the principal problematic issues facing prison reform within NI and made 40 recommendations aimed at achieving the characteristics of a "good prison system" (PRTa, 2011: 7). The review findings laid the foundations for a prison reform programme (DoJNI, 2011). Initially adopting a four-year plan, the reform programme now has a longer term approach which aims to build upon the improvements made within the first four years. Many of the recommendations made by the PRT (2011b) focused on the post-prison process, identifying the need for improvement in supporting successful resettlement and

desistance from crime. There have been improvements in this regard, with the CJINI (2016a; 2016b; 2017) highlighting that performance within all prisons within NI has improved in relation to the post-prison process (including an overall reduction in reoffending [DoJNI, 2017]). Additionally, NIPS has sought to engage more with outside agencies to address issues of resettlement and desistance. Through this the NIPS has trialled a range of approaches such as social enterprises within prisons, Working Out programmes and the conversion of Hydebank into a ‘Secure College’. There also has been a reduction in the daily average prison population, which has eased some of the pressures on the prison estate and the provision of services within the prisons. Under devolved powers, the NI Assembly has attempted to reduce prison numbers by encouraging the utilisation of non-custodial programmes, where appropriate (Butler, 2017).

Another focus of the NIPS prison reform programme was to reduce the costs associated with imprisonment. These costs have been reduced by approximately 27 percent from 2010/11 – 2015/16 (Butler, 2017). However, as highlighted by the PRT, making a cheaper prison service could result in “worse service” (PRT, 2011b: 44). Indeed, the level of savings achieved by NIPS has reduced the ability to invest in rehabilitative and desistance based programmes. As a result, the prisons within NI face insufficient levels of staff resources and increased levels of locked in cell time for prisoners (DoJNI, 2015). Additionally, persistent concerns have been raised in relation to NIPS’ ability to cope with prisoners with mental health problems and/or personality disorders (Committee for Justice, 2016; Committee for Health, 2016). While the reform programme sought to address issues in this regard by transferring the provision of healthcare to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT¹), which has responsibility for overseeing and delivering healthcare in prison, concerns still remain (Butler, 2016; Committee for Health, 2016; Committee for Justice, 2016). To exacerbate these issues further, it is estimated that over 75 per cent of NI prisoners struggle with addiction and/or mental health issues (Sugden, 2016).

Other problematic issues affecting the prison situation in NI are: high levels of staff turnover, high levels of staff sickness and difficulties recruiting staff

¹ South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT): is a regional healthcare trust that provides healthcare to the three prison establishments in NI, each prison has a healthcare centre on campus.

(Committee for Justice, 2016; Committee for Health, 2016). These issues pose a threat to staffing levels, service provision, levels of security, regime conditions and focus and effort regarding reform. Indeed, prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on-staff assaults have increased from 2010/11 – 2015/16, with prisoner-on-staff assault levels more than doubling (Butler, 2017). However, Butler (2017) argues that the reform programme could explain the increased levels of assault. She suggests that the progression away from the previous overly restrictive regime to the new regime that focuses more on purposeful activity, rehabilitation and desistance, could explain the increased opportunity for assault. This rise in assaults could be attributed to increased out-of-cell-time and subsequent engagement with other prisoners and staff. However, Butler (2017) argues that over time a more rehabilitative approach will allow individuals to engage with the relevant services and as a result become less inclined to behave in this manner.

1.3 Hydebank Wood ‘Secure College’

The CJINI conducted an unannounced inspection of Hydebank was conducted during the fieldwork period of this research. The introduction to the 2016 inspection report highlights the “continuing challenges in Northern Ireland where dissident groups constitute a real and present threat to the staff who work in the Northern Ireland Prison Service” (CJINI, 2016b: 5), in light of the murder of Hydebank prison officer, Adrian Ismay, the month the fieldwork for this study commenced. The CJINI (2016b: 5) inspection found the environment within Hydebank ‘encouraging’ and that the prison had improved in three of the four healthy prison tests since the CJINI (2013: v) inspection, where it was found to be “disappointing” in outcomes regarding safety, respect and purposeful activity. However, the 2016 report highlighted that more young men than previously stated that they felt unsafe within the institution, there was an increased availability of drugs and weak efforts to limit drug supply, a prevalence of bullying and intimidation, and mental health provisions were inadequate. On a more positive note, the report identified a shift towards providing educational and learning opportunities for the young men and commended the NIPS for their desire to innovate and improve, but suggested that Hydebank was still some distance away from achieving its full aims (CJINI, 2016b).

The reference to increased learning and educational opportunities is a product of the developments regarding the introduction of the Hydebank Wood ‘Secure College’ initiative, deemed an “important milestone” for prison reform (cited in Belfast Telegraph, 2015) by then Justice Minister David Ford. According to the DoJNI, the introduction of the college system is aimed at providing young men with the facilities to seek a more positive future, providing them with the opportunity to address offending behaviour through education, vocational training, mentoring and support programmes (Faragher, 2015). At the unveiling of the ‘Secure College’ Minister Ford stated, “This unique college environment will support, stretch and challenge young adults, and help them to develop their skills and employability, address their offending behaviour so they can make a positive contribution to their community after release” (cited in Belfast Telegraph, 2015). At present, the effectiveness of the new regime remains to be seen as it has only very recently been implemented; however, the young men and staff did offer comments on the ‘College’ system that are referred to throughout this thesis.

To facilitate the ‘College’ system, Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC²) has partnered with Hydebank to deliver some of the educational classes and vocational training provisions in the prison. The CJINI (2016b: 46) stated, “education, learning and skills had become firmly established as central to the secure college regime”. Under the new regime, it was compulsory for young men to attend classes or work during the day, ensuring that they were out of their cells. If they chose not to attend, they were docked pay. Weekly pay varied depending on the level of enhancement the young men were on, in line with the ‘Progressive Regimes and Earned Privileges Scheme’ (PREPS³) (discussed in greater detail below).

In terms of its inhabitants, Hydebank had the capacity to hold 254 young men in four houses Beech, Cedar, Elm and Willow, however its operational capacity was 134 throughout the fieldwork period due to the closure of Elm and Willow houses. The closure of these houses was largely attributed to cuts and strikes in relation to legal aid during the fieldwork period, alongside the increased use of restorative justice techniques within NI aimed at diversion from custody. As a result, the

² Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC): is the largest Further and Higher Education College in NI. It has paired with Hydebank to deliver a range of educational classes and vocational training to prisoners.

³ Similar to the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (IEPS) in England and Wales.

average number of young men being held within Hydebank was around 100 throughout the fieldwork period. Due to the constantly changing number of young men in Hydebank throughout the nine-month fieldwork period, statistics have been drawn from the CJINI (2016b) report to provide accurate information regarding the overall demographic of young men involved in the research. Of the young men being held in Hydebank 51 percent had been sentenced, with 10 percent of those sentenced to more than 10 years and 24 percent sentenced to under one year. The average age was 21, the youngest prisoner was 18 and the oldest was 24. Ninety-five percent were of white ethnic descent (including two percent Irish Traveller) with 62 percent of the young men from the Roman Catholic religion, compared to 16 percent Protestant, 12 percent atheist or 'nil' religion, seven percent 'other' and two percent Muslim. One hundred percent of respondents to the CJINI survey identified as heterosexual/straight and 26 percent were fathers (CJINI, 2016b).

Within Hydebank, there were two houses in operational use for young men, Beech and Cedar. Each house had five landings named B1-5 and C1-5 respectively. In line with the PREPS, each house had different purposes, Beech held the committal landing (B1) and the general population (B2-5). Cedar housed young men who were finding it difficult to mix with the general population (C1), young men who were deemed vulnerable for varying reasons including the nature of their offence (C2), those who were on the enhanced regime (C3-4) and those who had progressed through the enhanced landings to the low supervision landing (C5) (CJINI, 2016b). PREPS was introduced in 2006 by the NIPS who suggest that the system was designed to reward participation, as opposed to punishing 'bad' behaviour (Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders [NIACRO], 2006) (the young men did not necessarily agree that this was the purpose as will be discussed later in this thesis).

Throughout their sentence, prisoners were on either 'basic', 'standard' or 'enhanced' regimes that offered different levels of financial incentives, visits and out of cell time. All prisoners entered the prison at 'standard' and could be reduced to 'basic' through adverse reports or could progress to 'enhanced' after 6 weeks 'good behaviour' and passing drugs tests. At the time of fieldwork, around 42 percent of young men were on the enhanced regime, on three residential units in Cedar, C3, 4 and 5 (CJINI, 2016b). Each higher numerical landing provided more privileges and rewards such as extra visits, more financial incentives and longer out of cell

time. Those on the ‘enhanced’ regime could apply for a Working Out arrangement, which included the opportunity for ‘outside work’ (working in the community). A small minority of young men in Hydebank had secured ‘outside work’ and worked on a daily basis in various employment within the community.

1.4 Masculinities, men and prison

As mentioned previously, this thesis explores young men’s needs and experiences of prison, through the lens of critical masculinities studies. ‘Masculinity’ has a variety of definitions and interpretations (explored in greater detail in Chapter 2), but it generally refers to an individual’s belief regarding what it means to be a man (Connell, 2000). Connell (2000: 10) argues there are “different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man... and different ways of using the male body” to enact masculinity. She argues that boys learn to be men through social learning, such as socialisation by parents, interactions with other boys and young men and exposure to cultural portrayals of masculinities. These influences force boys at a young age to internalise perceptions of ‘manly’ behaviour and can result in a struggle for men in the enactment of masculinities (Connell, 2000; also see Pleck, 1981; Tolson, 1977; Willis, 1977). Social interaction – and subsequently masculinities – are influenced by historic, cultural and social factors that influence individual perceptions of what it means to be a man. As a result, Connell (2000) argues that there is not one specified expression of ‘masculinity’, instead, it is more appropriate to discuss multiple expressions of masculinity.

To clarify her claims that there exists a multitude of expressions of masculinity, Connell (1987) introduced the theory of hegemonic masculinities. She argues that hegemonic masculinity is the dominant expression of masculinity within any social setting. Other expressions of masculinity within her theory include: subordinate masculinities, the perceived inferior or subordinate expressions of masculinity; complicit masculinities, expressions of masculinity in which men benefit from the existence of the hegemonic ideal, but do not necessarily conform to its ideals; and oppositional masculinities, which exist in direct opposition to hegemonic masculinities (the theory of hegemonic masculinities is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2) (Connell, 1987). Connell (1987; 1995) argues that the hegemonic expressions of masculinity embody the culturally accepted way of being

a 'man'. Although only a minority of men may fully achieve hegemonic masculinity, the expression is generally idealised amongst men.

Building on the work of Connell (1987), Messerschmidt (1993) argues that because masculinities are socially constructed, different expressions of masculinity exist for different social situations, cultures, classes, ethnic groups and so on. In a joint article, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that many expressions of masculinity exist and men may emphasise varying expressions of masculinity depending on what is most appropriate to the environment they are in. They state that:

Masculinity is not a fixed entity embodied in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action, and therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting. (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 836)

Furthermore, Messerschmidt (1993) suggests that expressions of masculinity associated with working-class men tend to emphasise aggression and the propensity to engage in violence as key tenets to being a 'man'. This contrasts with middle-class perceptions of manhood that place less emphasis on aggression and more on competitiveness and career progression. Age can also play a factor in perceptions of what it means to be a man. Peristiany (1965) argues that young men place more emphasis on confrontation in the aim of achieving status amongst peers through visible displays of power. Older men tend to be more focused on providing for their families and believe manhood is achieved through this. Thus, older men are less likely to engage in violent confrontations out of fear of consequences for their family (Peristiany, 1965). These differing perceptions of what it means to be a man are particularly pertinent when conducting research in prison. Studies that explore masculinities within the prison setting highlight hegemonic expressions of masculinity amongst the prisoner group that are characterised by violence, dominance and dismissal of emotion (Sykes, 1958; Sabo et al., 2001).

Prison, as an institution of punishment, is designed by men to control other men. In terms of both staff and prisoners, prisons are overwhelmingly male-dominated institutions. As a result, the structure and nature of imprisonment are

characterised by perceptions of masculinity (Lutze and Bell, 2005). Prisons are defined by physical dominance and power and the authoritative nature of the prison as an institution can reinforce a masculine ideology that is characterised by the exploitation of some and the empowerment of others (Scruton et al., 1991; Sim, 1994). Thus, the structure and nature of imprisonment may reinforce expressions of masculinity – characterised by dominance, violence and dismissal of emotion – found in some prisoners (Sykes, 1958; Sabo et al. 2001).

Additionally, the majority of men in prison stem from working-class backgrounds (Stohr et al., 2013), therefore it is unsurprising that behaviours associated with working-class masculinities such as strength, aggression and ability to defend oneself are valued within the prison setting (Sabo et al., 2001). Furthermore, research conducted within prison settings suggests that due to the restrictive nature of imprisonment, behaviours associated with traditional masculinities within wider society, such as heterosexual relations, provision for family and independence are removed from men in prison (Sykes, 1958; Crewe, 2009). As a result, behaviours associated with hegemonic masculinities, which are available within the prison setting, such as violence, intimidation and dismissal of emotion, can become emphasised and utilised as a means of attaining masculine status and respect (Cesaroni and Alvi, 2010). Messerschmidt (1993: 81) describes men's utilisation of the resources available to them to achieve masculine status as 'doing masculinity'.

Building upon the pre-existing literature in the area, this thesis advances the theorisation of young men's masculinity in a number of areas: first, in relation to the communicative dimensions of masculinity, it builds upon West and Zimmerman (1987) and Messerschmidt's (1993; 1997) concept of 'doing masculinity'. These theorists argued that individuals engaged in specific inter-personal interactions and physical activities as a means of reflecting or expressing their gender identity. This thesis builds upon the pre-existing literature in the area by exploring how young men in Hydebank used public demonstrations of violence, and repression of any open expressions of vulnerability, to communicate their masculine characteristics to their peers. The communication to peers that they were violent and dominant was a method of avoiding exploitation and victimisation. This thesis also highlighted that through the subordination of those young men who were labelled 'heavy-whackers'

the young men communicated to the heavy-whackers the expected norms and values of the prisoner group, in a sense it was a form of prison socialisation.

Secondly, the thesis contributes to understanding of the relationship between temporality, masculinity and imprisonment. Through a gendered lens, it analyses how prisoners think about their ‘whack’ of time in prison and how this relates to their conceptualisation of themselves as men. For the young men in Hydebank cultural discourses associated the length of time a person spent in prison with status and respect. However, while “alternative ways of achieving masculinity” (Crewe, 2009: 437) within the prison setting can become “excluded” (Crewe, 2014: 397) or “suppressed” (Abrams et al., 2008: 22) some of the young men in Hydebank, whom the researcher labelled the Young-Elders, utilised cultural interpretations of time to secure forms of masculine credibility. The Young-Elders, who were some of the longest sentenced prisoners in Hydebank, were able to inhabit a mode of ‘respectable’ masculinity. They conformed to the rules and regulations of the prison without the usual stigma that affected other young men who conformed to the prison’s regime.

Thirdly, the research contributes to discussion on what are described herein as ‘transitional masculinities’. These masculinities were considered in the form of the ‘Young-Elders’, the consideration of this group identifies that expressions of masculinity in prison are more complex than the typologies introduced by Connell (1987; 1995). It also highlights that within the hypermasculine prison environment there is space for young men to distance themselves from violent masculinities and accomplish more positive transitional expressions of masculinity, such as employed, fiancé or father. The next section considers the socio-political context in NI and how this shapes youth masculinities.

1.5 Young men within the Northern Ireland context

NI is a transitional society progressing away from an extensive period of ethno-nationalist conflict. However, memories and issues stemming from the conflict remain pertinent. Political violence and paramilitary activity persist in many parts of NI (Gormley-Heenan and Monaghan, 2012; Nolan, 2014). Research highlights that the history of the conflict “significantly shapes and influences the everyday lives of young people, and in particular boys and young men from working-class and inner-

city areas” (Harland and McCready, 2015: 55). In particular, young men are growing up in areas where mural “representations of hard men cover urban spaces” (Ashe and Harland, 2014: 752). These large mural portrayals of armed and masked paramilitaries, alongside other political activists, celebrate those individuals who some believed protected their communities during the conflict (Ashe and Harland, 2014). This ‘defence’ of their community provided previous generations of young men from within NI feelings of power, status, respect and purpose within the community (Murray, 1995; Hamber and Gallagher, 2014). However, as documented later in the study, not all young men within Hydebank supported the paramilitary organisations within their respective communities.

Harland and McCready’s (2014) longitudinal study highlighted that young men from working-class communities were feeling increasingly marginalised, vulnerable and undervalued, with little optimism for change in the future. Young men felt disconnected from local initiatives and were “regularly perceived as ‘problems’ as opposed to resources, by adults in their communities” (Harland and McCready, 2014: 12). Exploring masculinities with young working-class men in NI, Harland (2000) identified that this group held narrow and contradictory perceptions of masculinity with many believing that being a man was characterised by power, strength, independence and intelligence. In reality, young working-class men’s lives within NI deeply contrasted with these perceptions of masculinity, with many possessing feelings of powerlessness, fear from regular threat of violence, neglect of physical and mental health concerns, need for support but reluctance to ask for it, and being labelled ‘stupid’ in school (Harland, 2000). Similar research supports Harland’s findings, highlighting feelings of marginalisation, normalisation of violence and a lack of optimism for the future in young working class men in NI (Lloyd, 2009).

Attempts have been made to explore powerlessness and marginalisation amongst young men in NI. Research conducted by Horgan (2011) highlights that NI has more than double the proportion of children living in poverty (21 percent) compared to British children (9 percent). Additionally, she identifies that NI communities possess high levels of disability and poor mental and physical health (Horgan, 2011). These issues are exacerbated by the large amounts of young people with undefined social status who are not in education, training or employment

(Horgan et al., 2010). Statistics highlight that young, working-class men in NI are over-represented in all areas of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and are over-represented as perpetrators of violence, suicides, school expulsions and academic underachievement (Harland and McCready, 2014). The continued portrayal of this demographic in the media as part of a widespread deviant subculture lacking traditional societal morals and values, reinforces the shared public perception that young men have become a ‘social problem’ (Harland, 2001).

While paramilitary organisations within NI may have once provided many young men with feelings of responsibility, a sense of belonging, respect and power amongst peers in the community (Creary and Byrne, 2014), since the Good Friday Agreement (1998) there has been an overall reduction in political violence. However, paramilitary organisations are still prominent within NI working-class communities, particularly in relation to systems of punishment. Through “paramilitary policing” (Topping and Byrne, 2012: 1) paramilitary organisations implement punishment beatings, shootings and community exile as brutal forms of justice (Napier et al., 2017). The demographic of young men held in Hydebank tend to be victims of such attacks. Victims tend to be males, under the age of 25, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with low levels of educational achievement and largely marginalised by NI communities (Smyth, 1998; Feenan, 2002). The punishments generally target young men who have been reported to the organisations by members of the community for theft, ‘joy-riding’ and ‘anti-social’ behaviour. While the brutality of these punishments is publically known, studies suggest they cannot operate without a certain amount of support from the community (McEvoy and Mika, 2001; 2002).

Harland and McCready’s (2014) afore-mentioned longitudinal research with young working-class men in NI identifies a significant concern from young men in regards to their personal safety, regular interactions with police and members of paramilitary organisations. Unwelcomed and violent interactions with paramilitary organisations were common concerns for many of the young men in the study, many of who had experienced punishments inflicted on themselves for ‘anti-social behaviour’ (Harland and McCready, 2014).

The purpose of highlighting issues of social marginalisation, the history of the conflict, regular interactions with paramilitary organisations and routine nature of violence in young men's lives in NI, is to provide a regional context to the communities many young men in Hydebank grow up in. There has been limited academic consideration of the construction of youth masculinities within the context of post-conflict NI (see Ashe and Harland, 2014; Harland and McCready, 2014). This thesis adds to knowledge in the area by analysing feelings of powerlessness, marginalisation and vulnerability in young men; and exploring their socialisation in cultures defined by violence, masculine stoicism and an anti-authority code of 'honour'. This thesis advances youth masculinities prison literature by examining the connections between the unique social, economic and political issues facing young men in NI, their experiences of prison and the construction of masculinities. To conclude this introductory chapter, below is an overview of the chapters that make up this thesis.

1.6 Overview of Chapters

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature relating to 'masculinity' and begins by discussing definitions of the term, drawing upon the early work of Freud to highlight the complex and contradictory nature of masculinities construction. Progressing on, the chapter reviews early approaches to explaining and understanding masculinities within society, exploring sex role theory, anthropological and ethnographic studies of men. Then follows discussion of the historic over-involvement of men in criminality, reviewing some of the early attempts by criminologists to theoretically connect men and criminality. The discussion regarding the relationship between men and crime explores Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinities, Messerschmidt's (1993: 81) "doing masculinity" theory and other critical masculinities studies relevant to this thesis.

Chapter 3, through a review of literature, explores the relationship between power, punishment and masculinities, seeking to explore the power dynamics that affect men in prison at all levels. The chapter is broken into three sections, each focusing on a level of power that affects men in prison. The first section examines the relationship between state power, punishment and masculinities. It examines

critically the different forms of punishment utilised by the state during varying historical periods. The second section explores the power relationship between the prisons as institutions and prisoners. This section explores how power is implemented through prison staff, regime and the structural layout of the prison. Additionally, it explores how prisoners resist the power of the institution and reconstruct masculinities within the setting. The final section in Chapter 3 explores inter-prisoner power dynamics examining the hierarchical structuring of expressions of masculinity in prison and how these gendered hierarchies can be defined by power and dominance.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology of the study. It begins by discussing pro-feminist literature and how this has shaped the researcher's perceptions of men and masculinities. Following this, the chapter outlines the ethnographic methodology utilised in the study. The chapter also highlights the stringent ethical considerations required for conducting research within a prison setting, particularly the difficulty in attaining informed consent for participant observational research in prison. In addition, the chapter discusses the reflexive approach of the research, the sampling procedure, participant recruitment, research realities and potential limitations of the research and the analysis of data.

Chapter 5 is the first of four chapters based on findings from the primary research conducted within Hydebank. The purpose is to explore how community-based issues shape expressions of masculinity in Hydebank. The chapter explores five significant community-based issues. It begins with a discussion on the feelings of marginalisation, powerlessness and being undervalued experienced by young men from working-class communities within NI. The second section focuses on emotional control, examining how young men within NI are socialised into stoical expressions of masculinity and how these permeate the prison walls. The third section explores the history of violence within NI and how this contributes to violent expressions of masculinity. Penultimately, the chapter considers the young men's interactions with, and perspectives on, paramilitary organisations present within NI communities and how these interactions impact young men's masculinities. Finally, the unwritten rules which dictate young men's expressions of masculinity within the NI community are examined.

While Chapter 5 discusses how societal issues impact the construction of expressions of masculinity, Chapter 6 explores how expressions of masculinity are constructed within the prison setting. In the aim of achieving this, the chapter explores the power dynamics that impact young men within Hydebank. The chapter is broken into three sections each focusing on a different power relationship influencing young men's daily life within the institution. The first section explores the relationship between the institution and young men, examining how the power of the institution invades most elements of prisoners' lives resulting in feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness. The second section discusses the power dynamics between the prison staff and the young men, highlighting discrepancies in the implementation of the PREPS, favouritism and 'playing the game' in the prison. The final section examines inter-prisoner power relations. It discusses the young men's disjointed perceptions of power: young men in prison can be among the most marginalised individuals within society; however, some may experience feelings of power and dominance within the prisoner group. This section also explores the informal economy within Hydebank and how those who control it maintain their position through dominance, violence and intimidation.

Chapter 7 explores young men's gendered experiences of time in prison, through the lens of critical masculinities studies. The role of time in structuring the prison experience emerged as one of the principal themes of the thesis due to the continual reference to it throughout the fieldwork period by the young men. The young men referred to their time spent within the prison as their 'whack' (of time). The ability to cope with their 'whack' was integral to surviving within the prison, those who could not cope often became stigmatised. Additionally, the length of time one had spent, or was due to spend, in prison contributed to the inter-prisoner hierarchy, with those who were on the longer sentences (but not for sexual related offences) commanding the most respect amongst the prisoner society. The young men utilised methods of masculine visibility, such as graffiti, to promote the length of their sentence to the rest of the prisoner group. Finally, the enhanced respect for those on the longer sentences facilitated the emergence of a group of Young-Elders to exist on the most enhanced landing in the prison. On this landing, in correlation with the PREPS, the young men were rewarded for compliant behaviour with the highest levels of enhancement, including keys to their cells. While some young men may have been stigmatised for their compliant behaviour elsewhere in the prison,

the Young-Elders' compliance with the prison was not stigmatised due to the length of time they had spent in the prison.

The final findings chapter, Chapter 8 considers some of the sources of vulnerability affecting young men within Hydebank. Young men in prison are often regarded as an inherently vulnerable group (Sloan, 2016), yet it is common for young men in prison to associate vulnerability with 'femininity'. This failure to recognise vulnerability can be damaging for young men. The chapter begins by exploring the physical and mental health of young men. Although many of the young men criticised the standard of care within the prison, a proportion highlighted a reluctance to speak about the problems they were facing to support staff out of a fear of victimisation and being perceived as weak. Furthermore, this reluctance to speak of problems, combined with the "pains of imprisonment" (Sykes, 1958: 64), resulted in young men resorting to self-harm and drugs to cope with their time in prison. The high levels of self-harm and drug use mentioned are the focus of the second and third sections in this chapter.

The final chapter, Chapter 9, reviews the four findings chapters. It considers how the findings from the study relate to previous prisons, power and masculinities related research; highlighting how the research has provided an original contribution to both gender and penal literature. Not only has the study explored the experiences of a forgotten and alienated demographic of prisoners within the NIPS – which shape masculinities within the prison setting – it has also explored the broader societal influences which contribute to the construction of masculinities in young working-class men prior to prison. Furthermore, the chapter provides an overview of the young men's experiences and perspectives of Hydebank's regime. The chapter finishes by providing an insight into possible further research in the area.

2 Masculinities

2.1 Introduction

One of the most consistent statistics about the CJS is the over-representation of men at all levels, from court to custody; overwhelming numbers of men dominate Criminal Justice proceedings (Newburn and Stanko, 1994). For a long time, this over-involvement of men in criminal behaviour was largely accepted. However, more recently, the exploration of what makes a man “criminogenic” (Cain, 1990: 12) has been growing. Empirical connections have been made between men and crime and expressions of masculinity and offending behaviour (Messerschmidt, 1993; Newburn and Stanko, 1994). There has also been increasing attention on men’s penal experiences in relation to masculinities (Evans and Wallace, 2008; Crewe, 2009; Karp, 2010). However, considering the high rates of reoffending and over involvement of young men in crime and subsequently the CJS (highlighted in Chapter 1), it is surprising that there is so little research focusing on young men within Young Offenders Centres and their experiences of masculinities in these environments (Cesaroni and Alvi, 2010; Earle, 2011).

In order to effectively explore young men’s penal experiences through the lens of critical masculinities studies it is imperative to initially define the term ‘masculinity’. This chapter begins by defining the term in relation to the study. It then explores how theories and studies related to masculinities have emerged and developed chronologically, beginning with an examination of the work of Freud followed by an exploration of sex role theory and relevant anthropological and ethnographic studies. The chapter then explores the emergence of masculinities studies in criminological research. Building on these theoretical foundations, there follows an exploration of theories which relate masculinities and power. The final section outlines the theoretical foundations adopted by this study and the chapter concludes by identifying the key elements of masculinities literature discussed throughout the chapter and their significance to this study.

2.2 Defining the concept and early examinations of masculinities

When exploring young men’s experiences of prison through the lens of critical masculinities studies, it is important to begin by considering what is meant by the

term ‘masculinity’. As was briefly explored in Chapter 1, the term ‘masculinity’ commonly refers to an individual’s belief regarding what it means to be a man (Connell, 2000). Reiterating this, Connell (2000: 10) suggests that there are “different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man... and different ways of using the male body” to enact masculinity. Connell (2005) argues it is because of the fluid character of masculinity that difficulties emerge in defining the concept. Perceptions of masculinity change historically, geographically and politically. Individual expressions of masculinity are negotiated and contested on a daily basis through inter-personal discourse, the conscious consideration of minor actions and existing normative systems of knowledge (Connell, 2005). As a result, there exists no one definitive expression of masculinity, instead the term refers to a multiplicity of identities that are malleable in relation to a complex web of external influences. In this sense, it is therefore more appropriate to refer to expressions of masculinity or masculinities (multiple), as opposed to ‘masculinity’ (singular).

The earliest recognisable attempts at establishing an account of masculinities can be found in early psychoanalytic theory, more specifically, the research conducted by Sigmund Freud (1953 [1900], [1905]; 1955 [1909a], [1909b]). Although Freud did not systematically discuss masculinities, it is evident that he sought to explore the complexity and conflict-ridden nature of gender identities. This provides a valuable starting point for beginning to explore contemporary understandings of masculinities. Freud’s research was based upon psychoanalytic knowledge that could be obtained through clinical observations and implemented through curative practice. Due to the connection between psychoanalysis and medical practice Freud’s research is often associated with attempts at normalisation and social control. However, Freud’s research laid the foundations for European liberalism, including radical social ideas, drawing into contention European societal and cultural assumptions made of masculinities (Connell, 2005).

It is because of this influence that Freud’s research has become recognised as the first identifiable exploration of masculinities, opening them to inquisition. His work was based on the recognition that masculinities are not assumed through nature, but a product of a complex process (Connell, 2005). Freud’s principal theory was called the ‘Oedipus Complex’ (Freud, 1953 [1905]). He argued that the ‘Oedipus Complex’ occurs during the phallic stage of psychosexual

development (between the ages of 3 and 6) when the child begins to form a sexual identity as a 'boy'. Despite her parental role, the boy's development of a sexual identity results in a sexual desire for his mother, which becomes quickly suppressed by the father in the aim of protecting his own sexual property from his child. Following this initial emotional experience of lust and desire, fear becomes instilled in the young man, fear of his more dominant, stronger, sexually powerful father, symbolically represented in the 'Oedipus Complex' as the fear of castration (Archer and Lloyd, 2002).

One of the key suggestions of Freud's work was that the human psyche was multi-faceted, comprising the id, ego and superego. The id is the instinctual part of the mind, it contains hidden memories, aggression and sexual drives. The superego is a moral conscience, it can be responsible for feeling guilty or weak. Finally, the ego is the realistic part of the human psyche that mediates between the id and superego. Freud argues that for boys (and girls) ego-based defence mechanisms provide resolutions between the conflicting id and superego. The first of these is repression, the blocking of emotional ideas and impulses from the conscious mind. The second is identification, through this the boy adopts personality traits of the father; this identification with his father subsequently removes the fear of castration (Freud, 1961 [1923]).

Through the subsequent identification with the source of his fear, his father, the young man is now capable of sexual union with a mother-like figure, another woman. It is through this process that an individual's expression of masculinity is formed (Kimmel, 2004). Freud's research and theorising evolved, building upon the 'Oedipus Complex', his 'Wolf Man' (1955 [1918]) study, highlighted the interaction of competing emotions in early adolescence, jealousy of the mother and desire for the father. Freud used these contradictions to explain the progress between the 'Wolf Man's' adolescent period into early adulthood, progressing from a promiscuous heterosexual narcissist into an apathetic figure highly dependent on others (Connell, 2005). The young man comes to resemble the predatory and possessive sexuality of the father, but fear remains; fear that he will become unmasked as a fraud, 'feminine', a man who has not been completely separated from his mother. He is fearful other men will realise who he is and do the unmasking. Fear of becoming unmasked and of his 'femininity' being uncovered results in the young man coming

to view his mother as voraciously infantilising, capable of instant humiliation, a stain on his projected character through her representation of maternal dependency. For the young man the mother represents the repressed characteristics of infancy, vulnerability and dependency (Kimmel, 2004). Gorer (1964 56) argues, as a result “all niceties of masculine behaviour – modesty, politeness, neatness, cleanliness – come to be regarded as concessions to feminine demands, and not good in themselves as part of the behaviour of a proper man”. The process of manhood therefore becomes a lifelong quest to display behaviours associated with normative expressions of masculinity, in the aim of proving to others that you can be deemed to be a man.

Freud’s thoughts in this area remained “speculative and incomplete” (Connell, 2005: 10); however, they had “profound implications” (Connell, 2005: 10) in laying the foundations for the critical inquisition into the patriarchal organisation of society and culture and how this was transmitted generationally through masculinities. Freud did not explore the social influences of the construction of masculinity further due to its relations with social analysis and his orthodox roots in psychoanalysis. Convinced of the coexisting feminine traits alongside masculine traits within individuals, Freud’s work came under criticism from more conservative psychoanalysts who abandoned the bi-sexual theory (Connell, 2005). Freud’s work, and psychoanalysis in general, has been criticised, particularly by feminists, due to the presence of “normative masculinity, masculine bias, devaluation of women, homophobia, and heterosexism” (Chodorow, 2014: 1) in psychoanalytical writing. It is argued to be essentialist in terms of its assumption that there are only two normative models of development, the boy and girl. Additionally, it neglects any inclusion of racial, cultural, ethnic or class based consideration (Chodorow, 2014).

Although Freud did not attempt to define or explore masculinities, he advanced understanding in the area. In terms of this study’s focus on how young men’s experiences of prison may be shaped by expressions of masculinities, Freud’s research is helpful in identifying how expressions of masculinity can be shaped through early socialisation. Furthermore, Freud highlights how expressions of masculinity within young men are influenced by an awareness of behavioural monitoring from other men and the subsequent repression of traits which may be associated with being ‘feminine’. As will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 3,

the conscious battle to prove one's manhood can become more intense in environments that are dominated by men, such as the prison setting. Freud's work was a major influence in early social sciences research on masculinities, particularly due to the differentiation in characteristics he attributes to both the 'feminine' mother and the 'masculine' father and influence of these traits on the early socialisation of children. This is explored in the following section.

2.3 Sex role theory

The work of Freud helped identify how society attributes different characteristics to men and women which become central to the social learning of expressions of masculinity. Progressing on from the work of Freud and building upon the key principles he introduced, this section will explore sex role theory. The first attempts to integrate masculinities into social science focused on gendered social roles. The term 'role' refers to the expected forms of behaviour associated with social status. Roles are conducted in accordance with social and cultural norms which guide behaviour in particular situations. The use of the term connects an individual's place in the social structure and their social behaviour (Lindsey, 2015). The concept of 'sex role' provides a connection between the biological sex differences between males and females and the socially constructed gender stereotypes which are associated with them (Connolly, 2004). Sex role theory suggests that in any context there are two sex roles, one male and one female. The theory suggests that forms of behaviour become associated with these sex roles and subsequently become internalised (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003).

One of the first studies in the area was conducted by Parsons (1955), who identified a distinct differentiation between female and male sex roles in the family based upon the varying 'expressive' and 'instrumental' roles adopted within this environment. Parsons' (1955) study was crucial in the development of understanding around masculinities in social sciences as he considered that expressions of masculinity were subject to change according to social influences. Parsons argued that sex roles adapted to the varying social influences they were subjected to. For example, sex roles adapt through agencies of socialisation, such as school, media, family and so on (Parsons, 1955). Throughout its early development sex role theory

was often portrayed as a development on Freud's work as it provided a means for considering social change. It was argued that the internalised sex role contributed to "social stability, mental health and the performance of necessary social functions" (Connell, 2005: 23). Therefore, sex roles were defined by expectations and norms attached to biological status.

The suggestion that the sex role was influenced by the varying social agencies it was subjected to was central to early studies on the 'male sex role'. The majority of the time, sex roles within society were clearly defined, regarded as an integral part of the socialization process and were generally believed to be beneficial to society as a whole. However, feminist thinking disrupted this standpoint. Throughout the early 1970s feminists highlighted how the female sex role oppressed women and socialised them into subordinated social positions (Connell, 2005). During these years of women's liberation, some men responded with hostility, however concurrently ideas started to ferment within colleges and universities, regarding the impacts of these prescribed sex roles on men within society. This sparked the beginning of the 'Men's Liberation' movement (Connell, 2005; also see Sawyer, 1970; Farrell, 1974). The movement included consciousness-raising workshops, groups and papers which began stressing the importance of examining the impacts of the male sex role within society and focusing on the costs that narrow conceptions of masculinity within society could have on men. For example, it was argued that the male sex role placed immense burdens on health, relationships and psychological well-being (Messner, 1998).

While Freud (1923; 1955 [1918]) introduced the concept of external social ideas impacting masculinities, he did not progress the idea. Sex role theory began to explore the impact of external social influences on masculinities, however the construction of the male sex role in sex role theory was conventional and one-dimensional. Assumptions were made regarding the normal forms of behaviour of men as opposed to explorations into why these behaviours were assumed or the impact they were having on gender relations (Connell, 2005). Pleck (1981) advanced sex role theory to arguably its most progressive limits (Messner, 1998). He brought into contention the traditional 'sex role identity paradigm' linking issues of conformity to the sex role and psychological adjustments. He criticised existing research's assumption that only one single, static expression of masculinity exists,

which develops from within, and is taken directly from one male social role, not varying across culture or time. Additionally, Pleck (1981) challenged the assumptions that the only issues emerging from this singular, universal role are associated with misogyny, violence and homophobia, largely ignoring race and ethnicity.

The significance of Pleck's (1981) research was the shift in thinking he provided regarding the male sex role and social control. He argued that the societal belief that there existed one traditional male sex role prevents individuals challenging their sex role, in turn making them feel insecure and inadequate, placing strain on men. Instead, Pleck suggested that there was not one male sex role, but each man has a multitude of roles. In a similar vein to Freud (1923; 1955 [1918]) and psychoanalysis, Pleck argued that the demands of these roles are somewhat contradictory and can have negative psychological consequences (Pleck, 1981). Pleck's research is significant as it brought into contention how sex role norms vary and how violation of these norms can invoke retribution, both internal and external. This over time reiterates the norms and their necessity, subsequently forcing others to conform.

In summary, sex role theory provides a valuable insight into the first attempts in social science to critically explore masculinities. Through critical examination it is evident that sex role theory is too restrictive in its conceptualisation of individual masculinity. For example, at any one time the male sex role could be used to encompass a man's family role, his occupational role and his role within recreational sports. At its most progressive stages, through the work of Pleck (1981), it is evident that he was beginning to recognise that there exists more than one expression of masculinity. This is significant to the study of young men in prison, where there exists a multitude of expressions of masculinity. Additionally, building on the work of Freud (1923; 1953 [1905]; 1955 [1918]), Pleck (1981) begins to identify the negative impacts traditional expressions of masculinity can have on men. However, sex role theory is criticised for exaggerating the extent to which male behaviour is prescribed, underestimating the effects of power or social inequalities on gendered relationships (Connell, 2005).

These factors are important in researching the prison setting as individuals or groups of young men can occupy positions of social and cultural power over other

young men in particular settings, but at the same time may be largely marginalised within society. Sex role theory also largely fails to take into consideration race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. These are factors which Connell (1987; 2005) tries to address through her theory of hegemonic masculinities, which will be explored later in this chapter. Sex role theory provided an important starting point for in-depth explorations of expressions of masculinity, which began to emerge through anthropological and ethnographical studies in the following years, the most relevant of these will be examined in the next section.

2.4 Anthropology, ethnography and masculinities

The development of sex role theory, coupled with the recovery by feminists of women's hidden history, sparked an interest in terms of rethinking 'men's history' towards the end of the 1970s. The new style of thinking began to examine the gendered history of men by examining varying social institutions. For example, Heward's (1988) research explored the developments of masculinities in a private school in England, identifying methods of teaching, discipline, dress and team games which instilled 'respectful', 'masculine' traits within the boys, traits which were representative of those characteristics supported by the children's social and class backgrounds. Other similar studies such as Seccome (1986) explored the role of masculinities in the labour market and the concept of the male 'breadwinner', often taken for granted as a core principle of being a man; and Gilding (1991) who focused on the varying relationships that comprise the family, such as childrearing and the division of labour which result in tensions between 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. Such studies help identify that expressions of masculinity exist throughout the history of institutions and economic structures. It is not just a concept related to the mind, body and personal identity of individuals, it exists within the wider world, within social institutions. To understand the historical development of masculinities it is essential to examine these institutions.

While the studies discussed above focused on how social institutions contributed to the construction of masculinities, other more culturally focused studies began emerging in parallel. Herdt's (1981) ethnographic study, explored the traditional culture of the 'Sambia' in Papua New Guinea. He found that their agrarian

culture was governed by rituals and myths and characterised by a village based political order. The culture is defined by chronic warfare, distinct gender divisions in labour and aggressive and violent expressions of masculinity. The distinct feature of Herdt's research is the exploration of the male tribal initiation rituals and veneration. In particular, the initiation process, which involves sexual acts between adult male tribal members and boy initiates. In this process, the 'Younger' sucks the penis of the 'Elder', ingesting the semen, passing what represents the essence of masculinity through generations. The Sambian tribe believe this act ensures the survival of their society. The act is culturally supported by a collection of rituals and stories which promote the social order of the Sambian people and the natural environment circling them. This is all done against the backdrop of the sacred Sambian flutes the defining feature of the tribe.

The significance of Herdt's research is the identification of a culture which is defined by chronic warfare and characterised by aggressive and violent expressions of masculinity. However, the longevity of the culture is based on 'homosexual' acts, something in direct opposition to normative expressions of masculinity in Western culture. The act of ingesting semen is common in other Melanesian cultures and is significant for a number of reasons: the existence of this culture violates Western beliefs that 'homosexual' tendencies exist only within a minority of individuals, as all Sambians engage in acts associated with 'homosexuality'. Additionally, the identification of this culture helps identify how culturally adaptable masculinity can be, in one instance, the ingestion of the semen of another male can be viewed antithetic of masculinity and in another instance it can be deemed to be the epitome of masculinity, ingesting the power of the tribe and ensuring the survival of a culture.

Arguably, the most significant historical study of masculinities was Phillips' (1987) research on the colonisation of New Zealand in the Twentieth-century. Beginning with the examination of settlement, Phillips identified an excessive amount of men within the new white settling population, essentially creating an all-male workforce. This resulted in the emergence of an unstable and unruly 'masculine' subculture, threatening social order. In response, the colonial state began promoting the benefits of family farming and agricultural settlements. Through these promotions the state associated marriage, family stability and security with normative expressions of masculinity. However, the demands of social control

began changing by the end of the nineteenth century, increasing levels of urbanisation and a more balanced sex ratio coincided with the subsequent subjugation of the Maori people. The colonial state began reversing the course of masculinities promoting violent expressions of masculinity. This was primarily for the purpose of the Boer War and then later the two World Wars, where the white New Zealand male population became utilised for British military use. The brilliance of Phillips' research is presented through case studies regarding the arrival and departure of colonisation. He identifies how propaganda, implemented through the media and politics, created a fabricated public account of New Zealand's manhood (Phillips, 1987). Although this example relates specifically to New Zealand, Phillips identifies how expressions of masculinity can be produced as a specific response to changing cultural environments.

These anthropological and ethnographical studies of expressions of masculinity help to identify the malleable and constantly changing nature of masculinities. As identified in Herdt's study, 'homosexual' acts can be deemed to be the epitome of manhood in one culture and the direct opposite of the normative expression of masculinity in another. Additionally, in the research conducted by Phillips it is evident how normative expressions of masculinity in one particular geographical location can evolve and transform throughout historical periods. Studies such as Heward's, Seccombe's and Gilding's also highlight contextual influences on the construction and malleable nature of masculinities. This is important to recognise in the study of young men in the prison setting; young men in this environment may feel obliged to reconstruct their own expression of masculinity as a means of adaption or survival. This process of adaption was explored by subcultural theorists, who attempted to understand aspects of young men's behaviour and subsequent involvement in criminality. This is explored in the next section.

2.5 Emergence of masculinities theories in criminology

While different psychoanalytical, sociological and anthropological studies began to explore expressions of masculinity within different institutions and cultures, some theorists began to attempt to understand the over-involvement of men in crime.

Indeed, “the most significant fact about crime is that it is almost always committed by men” (Newburn and Stanko, 1994:1). In general, across time and jurisdiction, women commit fewer and less serious crimes than men. This section maps the emergence of the consideration of masculinities in criminology. It is divided into two subsections: subcultural theories of crime; and the emergence and early development of theories of masculinities in criminology.

2.5.1 Subcultural theories of men and crime

The consideration of masculinities in criminology originates from subcultural theories of crime. Subcultural theorists attempted to explain men’s over-involvement in crime through the examination of subcultural values and characteristics which were seen to be key criteria in the causation of crime and criminality. These studies are important because, although they do not specify that they are studying expressions of masculinity, they explore the behaviours and underpinning motives of young men involved in delinquency and criminality.

Augmenting the research of Durkheim (1897) and Merton’s (1938) concept of ‘Anomie’, Cohen (1955) produced the first account of subcultural theory. He argued that delinquency was a product of attempts to address social problems within society. Cohen believed that crimes committed by young men could be attributed to the values adopted by their subcultural peer group. He argued that certain behaviours and traits were adopted by marginalised peer groups as they opposed the norms of the middle-class. Cohen argued that working-class young men rejected middle-class traits such as career focus, delay of immediate gratification for future gain, respect for property, control of aggression and utilisation of purposeful leisure time. Instead, young working-class men conformed to working-class values such as immediate gratification, toughness, aggression and excitement. Cohen contended that boys who were not socialised in middle-class principles were unlikely to succeed in enacting such values, leading to ‘status frustration’. Essentially, Cohen contended that all boys desired to attain success through a middle-class ideology, albeit secretly, but as opportunities in this realm were denied for most, the boys adopted malicious and negative behaviour as an oppositional reaction to school and middle-class standards and values. Rebellious and anti-social behaviours became methods for achieving positive status amongst subcultural groups of peers which were characterised by maliciousness, hedonism and impulsivity. Cohen argued these characteristics later

transcended into criminal behaviours as an attempt to oppose social marginalisation, he believed this was an explanation for criminality within working-class communities.

Progressing subcultural theory, Miller (1958: 5) introduced the concept “focal concerns”, which he believed characterised the conduct of boys from lower social classes. These focal concerns, which were identified almost 60 years ago, still typify the modern imperatives for hegemonic expressions of masculinity in young working-class men (see Harland and McCready, 2015). The focal concerns he identified in young men were: autonomy from others, desire for excitement, fatalist belief, physical and mental toughness and the belief that street smartness was more important and beneficial than academic learning. Miller argued that delinquency was a natural consequence of adherence to these subcultural standards and resulted in substance-fuelled, violent, risk-taking and excitement-driven behaviour which was underpinned by fatalist beliefs that they had no other choice but street life. Later studies such as Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) argued that some young men from the marginalised working-class conformed to a violent subculture in the aim of opposing the wider social belief system. They argued that violent criminal behaviour was sanctioned and internalised through the support of one’s peers (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). Later, Willis’s (1978: 30) study on the culture of bikers, detailed characteristics of masculinity including “domination of women, humiliation of the weaker (and) aggression toward the different”.

Subcultural theories have attracted criticism, most of which centre around the inability of the theories to recognise criminality outside that of the working-class (Hirschi, 1969) and the value system perpetuated by subcultural theorists. For example, Sampson and Bartusch’s (1998) research found that on a broader view working-class individuals did not hold significantly different beliefs or attitudes to the rest of society. Additionally, Cernkovich (1978) found that some middle-class boys adhered to the same principles identified in subcultural research. Finally, subcultural theories are criticised on the basis that they largely ignore and fail to consider girls’ and women’s ‘delinquency’ (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Maher, 1997).

2.5.2 Early development of critical masculinities studies in criminology

Subcultural theories laid the foundations for the exploration of critical masculinities studies in criminology by seeking to examine why men were over-involved (compared to women) in criminality and 'delinquency' more generally. Many of these attempts stemmed from sex role theory. For example, Parsons (1947; 1954) proposed that the disproportionate level of men involved in delinquent behaviour could be understood through the socialised roles created by the American family and societal structures. Roles of men in these social institutions were characterised by the 'breadwinner' stereotype. Through the 'breadwinner' role the man works outside of the home and is the principal financial provider for his family. Juxtaposing this, the traditional woman 'housewife' was responsible for home maintenance and the upbringing and care of the offspring. Parsons argued that boys from a young age see the different roles adopted by mother and father and realise that they are expected to emulate the father. Grosser (1951) adapted this analysis and applied it to juvenile delinquency. In a similar vein to Freud, Grosser suggested that young men recognised that their father's role as 'breadwinner' was characterised by power and wealth. Grosser argues that in emulating the characteristics of their fathers, boys strove to provide, and fought to obtain, power and prestige.

Building on the work of Parsons (1949; 1954) and Grosser (1951), Heidensohn (1985) argued that women were controlled at home, in public and at work. Subsequently, she argued, women commit fewer crimes than men because patriarchal society imposes greater control over women, reducing their opportunities to offend. As a result, in a similar vein to that proposed by Freud, boys adopt a dichotomous position to the mother and emulate a persona that is in binary opposition to her behaviour. Therefore, the boy adopts behavioural traits which are characterised by aggression, non-conformity and risk; often resulting in delinquent, anti-social and rebellious activity (Heidensohn, 1985). Despite the strong contrast in men's and women's involvement in criminality, academic consideration of crime tended to gloss over what was perhaps the obvious feature of offenders, that they were almost always men. Although the 'maleness of crime' was largely recognised within mainstream criminology, it was not often explored as a socially structured concept.

Indeed, feminist criminologists, such as Cain (1990), supported the belief that there was not enough emphasis on the social construction of ‘maleness’ and argued that this must be explored in order to examine what makes men so ‘criminogenic’. Cain (1989: 4) argued that “men as males have not been the objects of the criminological gaze”, that the most consistent and dramatic findings from the early workings of Lombroso to post-modern criminological thinking links ‘criminals’ to class as opposed to gender. However, a fact which has been clear from this early criminological thinking is that most offenders are and historically have been men. Although the focus does seem to revolve around men it tends not to ask about what it is about being a man that causes them to act in the way they do (Cain, 1989). As Walklate (2004: 32) argues, “while criminology might have thought a good deal about sex differences, it has roundly failed to think about gender”. A vital first step came from the change in thinking towards regarding men as men who become involved in crime, as opposed to men as working-class or migrants (Grosz, 1987).

By exploring masculinities as something that men seek to accomplish, it focuses attention on the practice of behaviours associated with particular expressions of masculinity. Viewing masculinities in this regard, provides a lens to explore why some boys/men become involved in criminal behaviour while others do not. Collier (1998: 21) believes there was a “masculinity turn” in criminological thinking which resulted in criminology beginning to examine the crimes “of men as men” (Collier, 1998: 3). He specifically highlights two seminal texts imperative to this ‘turn’, Messerschmidt’s *Masculinities and Crime* (1993) and Newburn and Stanko’s (1994) *Just Boys Doing Business*, which sought “to ‘reconceptualise’ (Messerschmidt, 1993) or ‘take seriously’ (Newburn and Stanko, 1994) masculinity” (Collier, 1998: 3) analysing the various criminological issues regarding crime and gender. Concurrent in these texts is the considered critique of previous criminological theories of masculinities and the argument that the social meaning of masculinities is not fixed or static.

Through these common principles both texts highlight complex and differing expressions of masculinity and how these can be constructed through varying levels of engagement with criminal behaviour. Collier (1998) argues that central to the masculinity turn was the reformation in thinking and de-sexing of men, exploring them as gendered beings and exploring the relationships between the construction of

masculinity and crime. In particular, Collier highlights how Newburn and Stanko (1994) argued that male over-involvement in criminality was not an essential characteristic of all men, but a complex reflection of wide-ranging external influences which needed to be examined within the context of gender relations.

In summary, this section has highlighted how critical masculinities studies emerged and developed in criminology. Although masculinities were not always the specified focus of investigation, subcultural theories began to examine the construction of violent, dominant and delinquent expressions of masculinity in young men and attempted to explain their behaviour. As identified through Miller's (1958: 5) research, the "focal concerns" found in young men 60 years ago are similar to characteristics associated with expressions of masculinity found in young men in contemporary research (see Harland and McCready, 2015). These studies are important to this thesis as they identify how some young men from a young age begin to conform to norms which oppose those adhered to by wider society in the aim of feeling a sense of belonging and purpose. Developing on subcultural theories, early attempts to explore the relationship between expressions of masculinity and men's over-involvement in delinquency and criminality stemmed from feminist theories of masculinities. These accounts explored the sex role of men within society and attempted to link this role to criminal behaviour.

Progressing on from Sex Role theories it is argued that there was a "masculinity turn" (Collier, 1998: 21) at which point criminological theories began looking at "men as men" (Collier, 1998: 3). This turn in thinking is crucial to the study of young men's experiences of prison as it highlights that expressions of masculinity are something that men seek to accomplish. Building upon this concept the next section examines the relationship between men and power, exploring Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinities, Messerschmidt's (1993: 81) "doing masculinity" theory and other critical masculinities studies that underpin the analysis within this thesis.

2.6 Critical masculinities studies: The relationship between masculinities and power

Thus far, this chapter has identified that expressions of masculinity are constructed, as opposed to being a pre-determined in character. Additionally, expressions of masculinity differ across history and culture and can be directly influenced or shaped by institutional and economic structures. Moreover, masculinities are fluid, dynamic and can be contradictory in nature, however, most importantly, masculinities are a product of social interaction. In order for theory regarding masculinities to develop from anthropological studies, sex role and subcultural theories, the acceptance of pre-existing passively internalised and enacted norms must not only be identified, but also challenged, exploring how they become created and reformed over time. Taking into consideration the varying theoretical understandings of masculinities discussed thus far, this section explores the gendered power relationships between men through the lens of critical masculinities studies. It examines how expressions of masculinity can create positions of dominance and subordination for men in particular social and cultural environments.

In doing so it is crucial to consider the relationship between masculinities and power: in particular, how some men gain dominance over others, how certain expressions of masculinity become idealised and how particular behaviours and characteristics become associated with different masculinities. In the aim of exploring the gendered power relationships between differing expressions of masculinity, Connell (1987) developed the theory of hegemonic masculinities. In particular, she sought to examine how competing expressions of masculinity attained power and control over other expressions of masculinity. Her theory will be examined in greater detail in the next sub-section.

2.6.1 Theory of hegemonic masculinities

The term ‘hegemony’ derives from the Greek language and refers to leadership and domination, it was adopted by Marxist philosopher Gramsci (1971) and applied to class relations. Gramsci argued that the ruling class retained dominance over the working-class not only through coercive and economic domination, but also through the manipulation of society’s dominant view of the world (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci argued that this view of the world was regarded by those who are subordinated as normal and they therefore actively consented to it, but were not brainwashed by it

(Finlayson, 1999). Gramsci (1971: 57) used the term “hegemony” to refer to “intellectual and moral leadership”, suggesting that the ruling class maintained hegemony through ideological persuasion, convincing the wider population that capitalist society was to be regarded as entirely rational and unbiased. Gramsci argued that the population is not simply passive, accepting the truths offered by the ruling class without question, instead he argues it is largely accepted on the basis that it provides simplistic explanation to a world that is much more complex. He argues that it is a continual process, where the ruling class repetitively persuade people that the universally dominant ideology is natural, inevitable and beneficial to everyone. However, it is used to justify the dominant political, social and economic status quo, benefiting only the ruling class and maintaining their ideological view of the world as a natural one (Gramsci, 1971).

Connell’s (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinities examines how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce social relationships that generate their dominance (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Dover 2005). The hegemonic expression of masculinity refers to the dominant expression of masculinity within the gender hierarchy. This dominant expression of masculinity becomes hegemonic when a culture accepts and honours it and when this acceptance reinforces the gender ideology into the culture (Hatty, 2000). Connell emphasises three characteristics which define hegemonic masculinities: toughness and competitiveness, the subordination of women and the marginalisation of gay men (Connell, 1987).

The theory of hegemonic masculinities helps provide a framework to understand how gendered relationships between men result in dominance and subordination. Hegemonic masculinities, as before mentioned, refers to the culturally dominant group of men within a society or culture whereas subordinated masculinities refer to those men who are marginalised or oppressed. Connell (1995) identifies the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of gay men as the most important example of this in traditional Western society. She argues this dominance takes place in a number of ways including political and cultural exclusion, cultural abuse, street violence and economic discrimination. Such oppression situates gay masculinities at the bottom of a gender hierarchy; within this framework being ‘gay’ is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from

hegemonic masculinity, this can range from the “fastidious taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure” (Connell, 1995:78). Hence, from the heteronormative viewpoint of hegemonic masculinities, gayness is closely associated with ‘femininity’. From this viewpoint there is a symbolic blurring of ‘femininity’ which results in some heterosexual men also being marginalised from the circle of legitimacy on the basis of possession of traits which are symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinities. For example, where an expression of masculinity is deemed to be hegemonic through behaviours such as control, aggression, dominance over women and homophobia; subordinated masculinities may be characterised by sensitivity, softness and compassion, all traits which are culturally expelled from the hegemonic ideal (Connell, 1995).

Such dichotomisation between hegemony and subordination should not be taken to imply differentiation only in gendered power relationships. The dichotomy relates to the division of labour, patterns of emotional attachment, psychological differentiation and institutional differentiation in terms of collective practices (Carrigan et al, 1985). It is the successful claim to authority rather than direct violence that is the mark of hegemony, although violence often underpins or supports authority. Hegemonic masculinities are the currently idealised expressions of masculinity, however they are historically mobile and fluid. Earle (2018) highlights that very few men achieve the idealised hegemonic expression. The theory relies on expressions of masculinity which are so far remote and unattainable few men ever achieve it, “but many collaborate in sustaining or legitimating those images of masculinity and thus reproduce its patterns of masculine power” (Earle, 2018: 53; also see Pfeil, 1995). Regardless of whether or not individual men achieve the ideal-type masculinity, Connell (1995) suggests that the majority of men support the ideal because of the patriarchal dividend of honour, prestige and control. Therefore, it is continually being reproduced and reconstructed. It becomes learned in particular situations and can be adopted and adapted in varying forms of everyday life, be it in the playground, factory floor or prison system.

Connell (1995) argues that additional expressions of masculinity also exist. Complicit masculinities refer to men who do not necessarily conform to the hegemonic ideal, but still benefit from its presence. For example, men in the workplace historically may have prospered through the subordination of women

even if they did not idealise or seek to conform to the hegemonic expression of masculinity. They recognise their position within the social setting is not one of dominance or one of subordination, but are happy to prosper from the side-line due to the dominant position of the hegemonic expression of masculinity in the patriarchal order. Marginalised masculinities, are often the non-white population or the lower socio-economic classes. Marginalised masculinities are marginalised in relation to the broader gender order and the dominant hegemonic expression. However, on a smaller scale they may exhibit emphasised characteristics of hegemonic masculinity as a response to their marginalisation (discussed in greater detail in sub-section 2.6.1) (Connell, 2005).

It is important when utilising the terms hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised to describe expressions of masculinity, to note that although the definitions of the terms remain the same – when applied to differing social contexts – the expressions of masculinity they refer to are not fixed or pre-determined expressions, they are fluid. The terms can be applied to any social environment or changing structural relationship, but the expressions they refer to have the continual capacity for change.

Connell's (1995) aim to promote a more sophisticated understanding of masculinities has come under criticism from a number of theorists, often focusing on the varying usage of the term 'hegemonic masculinity'. Collier (1998) argues that it is used in one vein to describe a certain set of characteristics or traits, which are meant to signify the most dominant and powerful expressions of masculinity in society and in the other vein to explain the cause of the crimes of working-class men. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity is utilised to explain a vast array of men's behaviour and criminal activities, meaning the term has become too vague and overused in recent times. He adds that writings have generally associated hegemonic masculinity with negative characteristics such as violence, carelessness and emotionlessness. However, Collier argues that this is ethnocentric in nature and refers to examples of cross cultural and anthropological studies which highlight masculinities that are characterised by positive traits, such as concern, caring and nurturing (Collier, 1998). Hearn (1996) adds to the criticisms arguing that there has been a failure to provide an adequate explanation for the term 'hegemonic masculinity'. He argues that in one instance the term can be used to provide a holistic

explanation for a culture, identifying an expression that all men within a culture aspire to. Juxtaposing this, the term can also be used to describe more than one expression within a culture and vary between cultures.

In response to the critiques of the theory of hegemonic masculinities, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) co-authored an article as a means of addressing and attempting to clarify some of the most significant criticisms. In the article they propose a reformation of the concept through the introduction of a more complex model of gender hierarchy. One of the principles introduced through this reformation was the introduction of a greater recognition of the geography of masculinities and the subsequent introduction of levels of gender exploration at global, regional and local levels. The examination of masculinities at global level refers to those masculinities which are emerging in transnational and international contexts and global institutions, such as world politics. The regional level refers to masculinities constructed at national or state level, for example national sporting icons. Finally, local level focuses on how masculinities are constructed through face-to-face social interaction, played out in communities, families or other social institutions, such as a school or workplace. The authors suggest these local masculinities can be explored using ethnographic and life-history research (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This micro level analysis is similar to what Connell (2002) referred to as gender relations which relate to the inter-personal face-to-face interactions which contribute to a person's masculinity within a given social or cultural environment such as the prison setting.

It is important to recognise that linkages between the levels exist. Indeed, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) state:

Not only do links between these levels exist; they can be important in gender politics. Global institutions pressure regional and local gender orders; while regional gender orders provide cultural materials adopted or reworked in global arenas and provide models of masculinity that may be important in local gender dynamics.

In the aim of adding further clarity to the usage of the hegemonic label, Evans (2018) argues that it is important to differentiate between hegemonic masculinities and traditional masculinities. He argues that while historically these expressions of masculinity may have been interchangeable, in contemporary Western society – in the period post-industrial revolution, that has witnessed the introduction of waged

employment and the changing role of women in society – there has been an increase in the “*good provider traditional masculinity*” [emphasis in original] (Evans, 2018: 250). Evans (2018) suggests that this ‘traditional’ expression of masculinity allows men to be ‘distant fathers’ by avoiding the engagement in behaviour which could be regarded as “too emotional, feminine or gay” (Evans, 2018: 250) and still maintain their masculinity by being a good financial provider for their family. He argues that traditional masculinities do not engage with or adopt any violent, aggressive, intimidating or indeed criminal characteristics to satisfy their identity and can be regarded as a ‘good’ citizen.

However, Maycock (2018) offers a contemporary critique, suggesting that the theory of hegemonic masculinities is outdated. Drawing on the work of Beasley (2008), Maycock suggests that the theory is “not able to fully account for the nuance and complexity of contemporary masculinities”. To further his argument Maycock identifies ‘inclusive’ masculinity (also see Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012) as a more developed theoretical perspective on modern masculinities. He highlights that modern theories of masculinities reject the argument that certain expressions of masculinity are characterised by homophobia and hierarchy in the performance of masculinity. Indeed, he cites Anderson (2009: 4) who argues that modern – particularly university attending – men “... are rapidly running from the hegemonic type of masculinity that scholars have been describing for the past 25 years”.

In summary, the theory of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1987; 2005) highlights that masculinities are adaptable to historical periods, geographical locations and individual interpretations. The theory suggests that masculinities can be constructed on a global sphere or in a specified proximate social space (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) and that construction is both “situational... and transformative” (Connell, 1993: 602). The hegemonic expression of masculinity is constructed on the basis of gender definitions which subordinate women to men and non-hegemonic masculinities to hegemonic masculinities. These varying facets ensure that the individual construction of masculinity is under constant peer and societal scrutiny. Everyday life is a contestation of men’s gender identity and there is a constant requirement to establish, prove and reinforce masculinity on a daily basis (Connell, 1993; 1995; 2002; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Additionally, the theory of hegemonic masculinities suggests that masculinities can be examined at varying social levels. The ability to apply the theory to micro level institutions is

crucial to the study of young men in prison. Within wider society this demographic of imprisoned young men are a largely marginalised group (Bereswill and Neuber, 2011), however within the prison setting young men can experience feelings of power and dominance within the inter-prisoner group (Michalski, 2015). These positions can be attained through specific gender actions and interpersonal interactions which are explored throughout the rest of this chapter.

2.6.2 ‘Doing Masculinity’

Around the same time as Connell’s (1987) study regarding the theory of hegemonic masculinities, West and Zimmerman (1987), building upon the work of Goffman (1955; 1959) and Garfinkel (1967), provided one of the earliest attempts at explaining gendered actions. They argued that individuals engaged in specific interpersonal interactions and physical activities as a means of reflecting or expressing their gender identity, whilst at the same time consciously measuring the behavioural decisions of others in a similar capacity. They labelled this process of the formation of gender expectations – based on conscious behavioural decisions, self-presentation and routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interaction – as “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 125). Within this conceptual framework gender is seen as more than an adopted individualistic characteristic, instead it is a complex mechanism whereby social action contributes to the construction and reproduction of social structure. Gendered social structures are a product of gendered behavioural demands which are contributed to by every social interaction, action and activity (West and Fenstermaker, 1995).

Two of the crucial elements which underpin doing gender theory emerge from the work of Goffman (1955; 1976). The first of these elements is “gender display” (Goffman, 1976: 69). Goffman (1976) argues that through ‘gender display’ behaviours can be regarded as two part exchanges – one of action and the other of reaction – the presence or absence of symmetry can establish deference or dominance amongst different expressions of masculinity. The second key element is “the presentation of self” (Goffman, 1959: 1), the self-image portrayed in relation to the perceived accepted social attributes. Goffman argued that social actors present a self-image which is consciously constructed in conjunction with social expectations. On the occasion when this self-presented image fails, the individual is ‘out of face’. In such a circumstance the social actor adjusts his positioning or ‘line’ to regain face.

The importance of these two principles, in relation to the gendered presentation of self, are that they highlight the conscious agency utilised by social actors in relation to social interactions and behaviour. They also provide an insight into how the concept of doing gender can contribute to the formation, continuation and reproduction of gendered social structures.

Building on the work of Goffman (1955, 1959, 1983) and West and Zimmerman (1987) in relation to doing gender, and Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinities, Messerschmidt (1993, 1997) attempted to apply the concepts to better the understandings of men's involvement in criminality. He supported the belief that social structure and social action are reciprocal and emphasised that the role demands of masculinities will vary within a given social structure and in any given situation. He argued that there were three underlying social elements which contributed to social structure and gender relations: division of labour, gendered relations of power and sexuality. Messerschmidt (1993: 82) argued that hegemonic masculinity was an expression of masculinity characterised by "authority, control, competitive individualism, independence, aggressiveness and the capacity for violence". He argued that men strive to achieve and purport a masculine gender identity, a presentation to the wider audience that they are indeed a man. In order to ascertain this identity, they adopt the varying available resources to demonstrate this. Messerschmidt (1993: 81) labelled this conscious effort, "doing masculinity". He argued that whenever normative middle-class expressions of masculinity are unavailable to men, criminality becomes a viable alternative. Crime becomes a resource for the "situational accomplishment" of masculinities (Messerschmidt, 1993: 79).

The fluidity of masculinities is highlighted in Messerschmidt's work; he identifies how various expressions of masculinity can adopt different forms of crime to satisfy their gender identity. For example, a white middle-class school boy may partake in non-violent crimes, such as graffiti. By contrast, a member of a minority ethnic group, from a poorer social class, may feel the need to resort to other more serious forms of criminality, for these young men "doing masculinity necessitates extra effort" (Messerschmidt, 1993: 82) due to limited resources and therefore they adopt a "physically violent opposition masculinity" (Messerschmidt, 1993: 105).

The studies conducted by Goffman (1955, 1959, 1983), West and Zimmerman (1987) and Messerschmidt (1993, 1997) have become synonymous with the concept that expressions of masculinity and associated behaviours can be used as a performance for securing masculinities. There are direct links between these studies and the theory of hegemonic masculinities presented by Connell (1987; 1995), notably how specific gendered acts constitute and establish hegemony within groups of men. The concepts of doing gender and situational accomplishment enhance understanding of how expressions of masculinity can cultivate and develop within particular social environments, contributing to the establishment of dominant social structures and hierarchies. This is particularly useful for examining masculinities at the local level, in institutions such as the prison. The construction of these gendered relationships within the prison setting are explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

2.6.3 Crisis, marginalisation and ‘laddism’

Some theorists suggest that modern men and masculinities are in a “state of crisis” (Reeser, 2015: 20), the result of an evolving economy and the continual rise of women into positions of both economic and social power, positions which were traditionally exclusively reserved for men (Segal, 1990). Clare (2001: 3) endorsed this notion of “masculinity in crisis”, arguing that men were now in danger of becoming “redundant” and that it was “difficult to avoid the conclusion that men are in serious trouble”. Clare (2001) suggested that the threatened man faces concerns regarding their traditional familial role as fathers and providers with higher rates of divorce and unemployment and increasing numbers of women becoming sole or primary financial providers for families and dependants. In addition, statistics suggest that there are: increasing rates of suicide amongst men, increasing drug and alcohol addiction; continued reluctance to access health services, poorer health and higher risk of death relative to women; shorter life-span than female counter-parts; emotional illiteracy, educational underachievement and over-representation in all areas of the CJS (Clare, 2001). It is argued that these socio-economic factors are affecting men to such a degree that they are in a period of ‘crisis’, fuelling the argument that men are “losing out” to women and are the “new victims” (Ruxton, 2009: 24).

Similarities can be identified between the notion of “masculinity in crisis” (Clare, 2001: 3) and marginalised and protest masculinities. As identified earlier in this section, hegemonic, subordinated and complicit expressions of masculinity are central to the gender order. However, the interplay of other external factors such as that of social class, ethnic background and race must also be taken into consideration. In order to accomplish this, Connell (1987) introduced the concept of ‘marginalised’ masculinities. Normally marginalised masculinities exist outside the mainstream of power, however marginalised masculinities can still possess power in specific contexts. For example, marginalised men can still hold power over women or over other marginalised men. As with all expressions of masculinity, marginalised expressions are fluid, configurations of practice and product of the changing structures of relationships.

Marginalised masculinities have received specific attention in relation to the rebellious nature of some young men. Connell (1995) argues that within groups of marginalised men, expressions of ‘protest masculinity’ – or ‘oppositional masculinity’ (Messerschmidt, 1999) – can exist. Connell (1995) argues protest masculinity is built on the foundations of working-class solidarity, a principal element of marginalised masculinity. She argues that protest masculinities embody a claim to power at regional level, but lack the economic resources and institutional authority to achieve the goal (Connell, 2000). This, alongside a restless strive for success, results in an overcompensation of aggression and also self-destructive, risk-taking behaviour (Connell, 1995). Violence then is a contextually available masculine resource which can be drawn upon by young men to demonstrate to others their manhood (Messerschmidt, 2000). Therefore, as with all expressions of masculinity, characteristics, behaviours and traits are constructed in relation to individual structural situations. Men can be more powerful and dominant over others within marginalised groups through the overemphasis of behaviours associated with hegemonic masculinities, such as violence, aggression and risk-taking.

Two prominent texts, Campbell’s (1993) *‘Goliath’* and Faludi’s (1999) *‘Stiffed’*, from the UK and USA respectively, highlight issues facing traditional masculine order in terms of societal roles, practices, opportunities and institutions. Both studies highlight how these societal issues became destabilised, resulting in increasing amounts of problems for large numbers of young men. These issues

subsequently became problematic for society as young men resorted to anti-social forms of behaviour such as joy-riding, fighting, rioting and drug taking as a means of achieving masculine status. Without directly defining and identifying with the notion of 'masculinity in crisis', Campbell (1993) examines the 1991 riots throughout England as a masculine response to economic crisis. She explores how young, largely unemployed, working-class men living on increasingly run down estates – whose fathers' expressions of masculinity were defined by employment – were increasingly being defined in relation to criminality. She found that unemployment was central to the emergence of protest masculinities, characterised by criminality and practised in the form of drug use, joyriding, burglary and subsequently rioting. She identified a shift in masculinity generationally, where the young men who were largely involved in the riots had fathers who were characterised in terms of a 'working masculinity', something which was largely unavailable to them resulting in an adoption of one defined by criminality (Campbell, 1993).

In a similar vein, Faludi's (1999) feminist inspired research, identified how men in the USA aspired to live up to the expectations of masculinities that were constructed in post-WWII USA. Faludi argues that because of economic pressures coupled with globalization, these prior avenues were unavailable, meaning men could not achieve their desired role as providers. She also relates these goal blockages to the emergence of an 'ornamental culture' – which developed post-WWII – whereby expressions of masculinity were constructed in correlation with celebrity imagery, entertainment, marketing and consumerism. This 'ornamental culture' did not glamorise functional public roles and therefore did not encourage or show young men how to be a larger part of the social system. Faludi specifically linked the problematic nature of life for young men in American society to absent and abusive fathers, and their failure to provide positive nurturing environments. She argued these paternal failures could partly be attributed to large-scale redundancies and male unemployment during the 1980s and 1990s.

In relation to the concept of protest masculinities, it could be argued these expressions of masculinity are not simply restricted to marginalised masculinities, the emergence of 'lad culture' or 'new laddism' refers to an association shift in class allegiance from middle and upper class men to working-class values. Some theorists

attribute this shift in allegiance to the introduction of men's lifestyle magazines in the early 1990s, such as *Loaded*, which featured articles and imagery regarding male physique, women, humour and football. A reader of *Loaded* stated "I think the magazines are aimed at the average lad... have a few beers, watch the footie, trying to, er, pull girls..." (Jackson et al., 2001: 117). Furthermore, with the introduction of men's magazines, there was a distinct celebration of working-class celebrities and footballers and prominent genres of British film and film actors which prominently featured working-class connotations. Also, probably most importantly in relation to protest masculinities 'new laddism' was seen to exist in binary opposition to the characteristics of the feminist friendly 'new man', 'lad culture' became an embrace of traditional and conservative masculinity, devoted to misogyny and homophobia (Benwell, 2002). In his autobiography Southwell, one of the joint founders of *Loaded*, claimed that this endorsement of hegemonic masculinity was an absolution of the guilt of having antifeminist views and behaviour, it was about galvanising a nation of men and encouraging them not to feel ashamed of being a "bloke" (Southwell, 1998: 214).

The gendered relationships between men, often characterised by power and dominance, are imperative to the study of masculinities, particularly within the prison setting. However, it is also important to take into consideration the literature regarding 'masculinity in crisis' which draws into contention distressing issues regarding some masculinities and the impact they are having on men. For example, increasing rates of suicide amongst men, increasing drug and alcohol addiction, continued reluctance to access health services and continued over involvement in the CJS. The links between these issues and marginalised masculinities are extremely relevant to the study of young men in prison who are largely marginalised on a social and economic basis. The following section outlines the theoretical underpinnings adopted by this study.

2.7 Theoretical underpinnings

There exists a variety of approaches in the exploration of masculinities, as has been identified throughout this chapter. This variety of approaches can contribute to conceptual and theoretical problems in conducting research and reaching a specified

theoretical approach (Sloan, 2016). Therefore, it is imperative to identify the theoretical approach this research is undertaking. This study utilises the principles of the theory of hegemonic masculinities, augmenting the argument that there exists a culturally accepted dominant model of masculinity within the gender hierarchy. This expression of masculinity is legitimated by social relationships, interactions and behaviours, reinforced by the gender ideology in the culture. Furthermore, in parallel to the theory of hegemonic masculinities, this study supports the belief that there exists a variety of expressions of masculinity (Connell, 1987; 1995; 2002).

This study builds upon the argument that there exists a variation of levels of understanding and examining masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Through this approach it is argued that expressions of masculinity can be understood at global, regional and local levels. With local level analysis best suited for understanding gender relations, the inter-personal face-to-face interactions which contribute to individual expressions of masculinity within a given social or cultural environment, such as the prison setting. In correlation, this study progresses the argument that expressions of masculinity are malleable, exist differently within varying cultural settings and that everyday life is a contestation of one's expression of masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Finally, this research builds upon the work of West and Zimmerman (1987) and Messerschmidt (1993, 1997) in relation to the concept of 'doing masculinity' and argues that individuals engage in specific inter-personal interactions and physical activities as a means of reflecting or expressing their masculinity, whilst at the same time consciously measuring the behavioural decisions of others in a similar capacity. These interactions and performances are subject to change depending on the resources available to the individual. In this regard, crime or other associated behaviours, such as violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour, are resources for the situational accomplishment of masculinities.

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter has provided a critical review of theoretical and empirical masculinities studies, highlighting that 'masculinity' does not have one definable form. Instead, it is more appropriate to refer to a multiplicity of expressions of

masculinity, which are influenced by a complex web of external influences. This was highlighted through the work of Freud (1923; 1953 [1900], [1905]; 1955 [1909a], [1909b]) who began to explore the complex, contradictory and impure nature of masculinities. Freud identified how expressions of masculinity are individually constructed and contested on a daily basis. Components of Freud's findings are still relevant to modern research regarding masculinities notably that men must prove their manhood to themselves and other men, in the process repressing all behaviours associated with 'femininity'.

Building on these foundations, sex role theory was the first attempt to explore masculinities in social sciences. Pleck's (1981) research in the area is arguably the most significant, highlighting the need for recognition of more than one male sex role and arguing that it is more appropriate to discuss a variety of expressions of masculinity. The fluidity of masculinities was further highlighted through the exploration of anthropological and ethnographical studies on men's position within social institutions, historical periods and varying cultures. The early study of masculinities in the criminological sphere represented an attempt to understand what it is about men which results in their over-representation in the CJS. Early work in the area through subcultural theories highlighted how socially marginalised young men may conform to subcultural values which oppose middle-class values such as toughness, aggression and excitement (Cohen, 1955). Without directly mentioning masculinities, Miller (1958: 5) identified "focal concerns", characteristics which are still commonly utilised by young men in contemporary society in masculinity enactment.

The consideration of the relevant early theoretical and empirical masculinities studies provides an insight into the emergence of thinking and rationale behind the study of masculinities. Progressing on from these early studies, the chapter then explored the gendered relationships between men and masculinities through the lens of critical masculinities studies. Of particular significance is Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinities, which highlighted how gendered relationships between men and masculinities are often characterised by power, dominance and subordination (Connell, 1987; 1995). This theory provides a platform to examine how some men ascertain and maintain positions of power and dominance over women and other men. Exploring the relationship between masculinities and power

further, this chapter considered theories relating to doing gender and the situational accomplishment of masculinities (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Messerschmidt, 1993, 1997). These theories argue that men undertake specific gendered acts in an attempt to secure and prove their manhood in particular cultural environments. The consideration of the theory of hegemonic masculinities and theories regarding doing masculinity provide an insight into how expressions of masculinity can be shaped by power relations.

The discussion of expressions of masculinity and power, highlighted how some expressions of masculinity become subordinated or marginalised. The chapter considered the argument that there is a “crisis in masculinity” (Clare, 2001: 3), which provided an insight into the problematic nature of some expressions of masculinity and issues they create for men. Notably: rising suicide rates, reluctance to seek medical care, increasing substance abuse and addiction problems and a far greater representation of men in the CJS compared to women. In conjunction, the concept of marginalised and protest masculinities helps provide an insight, in a similar vein to that outlined by subcultural theorists, into how and why young men react to social marginalisation, as documented in Campbell (1993), Faludi (1999) and Jackson et al.’s (2001) research.

Drawing from the above discussion of developments in the theorisation of masculinities, this chapter has identified the theoretical underpinnings which provide the foundations for this study. In particular, this study utilises concepts from the theory of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1987; 1995; 2002), including: the belief that there exists a culturally accepted dominant model of masculinity in particular settings; and that masculinities can be examined at a range of levels, with local level analysis focusing on institutional environments, such as the prison setting (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Progressing forward, a variety of studies have explored masculinities within the prison setting (see Jewkes, 2005; Evans and Wallace, 2008; Sloan, 2016). The next chapter explores these studies as part of an examination of the relationship between power, punishment and masculinities at state, institutional and inter-prisoner levels.

3 Power, Punishment and Masculinities

3.1 Introduction

Building on the theoretical foundations outlined in Chapter 2, this chapter explores the relations between power, punishment and masculinities relevant to young men in prison. Scott (2008: 206) defines power in its most basic form, as having “an ability to make somebody do something that they would not normally do”. He argues that when conducting research in prisons, it is important to consider the wider economic, political and social factors that influence who is punished and why. In considering these factors, it is important to recognise concerns relating to power, such as: wider power relations in society, who holds the power to define crime, who holds the power to exercise punishment and how all these factors shape crime controls within society (Scott, 2008). In terms of the relationship between power and masculinities, Sloan (2016: 162) suggests that men in prison are, “by their very situation, disempowered”, however this does not prevent some men within the prison setting achieving masculine status. She argues that power can be achieved through inter-prisoner relationships, conferred through the responses of others (Sloan, 2016). Therefore, when considering the relations between power, punishment and masculinities relevant to young men in prison, it is important to set the constitution of masculinities within their broader social and institutional contexts. To achieve this, this chapter examines the power relations relevant to young men in prison at state, institutional and inter-prisoner level.

The chapter is divided into three sections each focusing on varying, but interlinked, relations between power, punishment and masculinities. The first section examines critical perspectives on state power, punishment and masculinities historically and contemporarily. The second section examines institutional power, punishment and masculinities, examining how prison staff, regime, institutional design and conditions can shape expressions of masculinity within a prison setting. The final section explores the inter-prisoner power relationships present within penal institutions. It explores how cultures of power emerge and are maintained by men within the prison setting. It also considers how damaging particular expressions of masculinity can be to men in prison.

3.2 State power, punishment and masculinities

It is a common perception that crime and punishment are directly connected, almost to the point when if one changes the other will inevitably change accordingly; for example, that if the crime rate increases, the imprisonment rate will also increase and vice versa. However, this is not necessarily the case. Crime and punishment are connected by the legal system, however they are separate phenomena, which are not fixed, but fluid and adaptable. ‘Crime’ is relative to geographical locations and historical periods, what is a crime now in the UK may become lawful in the future and may already be legal in other jurisdictions. In essence, state law defines crime. Similarly, punishment is also something subject to change depending on the current law of the state. The law is not independent of socio-political influences and is subject to change at times when deemed appropriate by the state. Therefore, in relation to punishment in the CJS the state holds power. This section explores the relations between state power, punishment and masculinities, providing a framework for the later examination of young men’s experiences of prison through the lens of critical masculinities studies. There are two sub-sections, the first provides a historical examination of the relationship between state power, punishment and masculinities and the second provides an overview of critical perspectives of the relations between state power, punishment and masculinities in the period of neo-liberalism.

3.2.1. A historical critique of the relations between power, punishment and masculinities at state level

Marx did not focus specifically on the area of punishment, however scholars often draw from the broad theory he developed, regarding social structure and historical change, to create their own theoretical frameworks for the examination of varying forms of punishment. The majority of Marxist perspectives on punishment share the common principle that punishment is utilised to maintain the social and economic dominance of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat and utilise the method of ‘historical materialism’ to examine this relationship (Garland, 1990). Historical materialism examines the relationship between punishment and the economic structure of society during a particular epoch. It explores how the penal practices and ideologies of each period favour and benefit ruling class interests. Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939) were one of the first to adopt this approach. They identify how punishments during each epoch relate to the economic requirements of the period

and are portrayed as progressive, rational, scientifically supported and humane. However, in reality the punishments are primarily in place to further and reinforce the demands and interests of the ruling class.

Rusche and Kirchheimer's (1939) study examines methods of punishment throughout the early and late Middle Ages and the Seventeenth Century. They found that each epoch possessed a different system of punishment, which was a product of the economic and social structure of the period. They explored each period's principal form of punishment's general function, its promoted moral effects and subsequent reciprocal relationship with basic social relations. They suggest that the development of new productive forces can force a change in punishment and that every mode of production requires a specific corresponding punishment. Punishment, therefore, must be viewed as deeply embedded in the maintenance of the bourgeoisie's dominant position in the class struggle.

Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939) argue that the nature of the labour market and the population growth rate, fix a social value on human life. Examining this relationship in three historical periods, they identify the use of fines, popular in the early Middle Ages, a time when work was in abundance and the living conditions of the proletariat were reasonably respectable. Therefore, punitive responses from the state or landowners were not likely to be productive. However, in periods when the availability of labour is greater than the availability of work, such as the late Middle Ages, there was a large amount of poor without work. Therefore, penal policy was brutal and reckless with human life and capital punishment was used extensively. In the final epoch identified, the Seventeenth Century, there was a labour shortage. Early capitalism needed more labour power and therefore the state was less willing to be reckless with human life. This period saw a rise in imprisonment and subsequently penal labour to make up for the shortfall. It was better for capitalism that offenders should be incarcerated and given productive work. Therefore, punishment could be used to "fill out the gaps in the labour market" (Rusche and Kirchheimer, 1939:7).

Melossi and Pavarini (1981) critiqued Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939), arguing that they failed to explain the continued use of prison as the principal model of punishment in the Twentieth Century. Melossi and Pavarini (1981) suggested that the prison is "*ancillary* to the factory" (Massa, 2016: 313), both sharing discipline

as a defining characteristic. They argue that within capitalist society disciplinary practices spread out from the factory to the varying ancillary social institutions, which in turn become a method of reproducing capitalist relations. The use of imprisonment continued into the Twentieth Century as a method for socialising the labour force into industrialised capitalist production. Melossi and Pavarini (1981: 188) argue that “for the worker the factory is like a prison (loss of liberty and subordination); for the inmate the prison is like a factory (work and discipline)”.

As a means of supporting their claim, Melossi and Pavarini (1981) explore the transformation of the rural masses. Originally living off the products of the earth, rural masses transformed into urban workers living off employment in the factory. Melossi and Pavarini argue that for this transformation to occur the working-class go through a paradox, freeing themselves from the serfdom of the Middle Ages only to become enslaved by the political economy and rules of the labour market. The prison has an important role in this new capitalist society, used as a mechanism to transform the poor, deviant, individual into a functional worker. Procedurally this destruction and reconstruction begins with the criminalisation of the poor, following this the criminal is reconstructed into an inmate, and finally the inmate into a functional worker.

Ignatieff (1978) also utilised historical materialism to explore state power and punishment in England from 1750-1850. During this period, the prison population rose to its highest ever levels (mid-1830s [see Zimring and Hawkins, 1991]) relative to the total population. Ignatieff argued that labour market conditions were one of the determining factors in the punishment strategy at the time. He related the increase in the use of prison to the rising rates of unemployment, one of the products of the industrial revolution. Ignatieff argued that crime during this period was a product of the continuing crisis in labour market disciplines and class relations. He suggested that those in power – the policy makers, bourgeoisie and ruling class – did not utilise mass imprisonment as a “functional capacity to control crime”, but as a response to the “whole social crisis of the period as part of a larger social strategy... designed to re-establish order on a new foundation” (Ignatieff, 1978: 210).

Ignatieff (1978) proposed that because of the change in the labour market, the state had to undertake the disciplinary functions previously exercised by employers. Exploring the introduction of the new police (1828), he identified how the focus was

not on major crimes, such as burglary and robbery, but on minor deviant crimes such as drunk and disorderly. He states, 85 percent of police arrests in the 1830s were “for vagrancy, prostitution, drunkenness, disorderly behaviour and common assault, while only 15 percent were for indictable offenses, most of these being petty larceny and pickpocketing” (Ignatieff, 1978: 185). The visible change in control of the poor in the emergence of an industrial society emphasised the “imperative to control, to dominate and to subdue” (Ignatieff, 1978: 18). Essentially, the transformation in penal policy during the industrial revolution can be linked to the state’s attempts to combat growing social disorder among the lower classes.

Critical studies regarding the political economy and punishment, such as Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939), Melossi and Pavarini (1981) and Ignatieff (1978), identify how prison can be regarded as a key tenet in the wider strategy of dominance by the ruling class. Indeed, Rusche (1978[1933]: 3) highlights, that “the criminal law and the daily work of the criminal courts are directed almost exclusively against those people whose class background, poverty, neglected education, or demoralization drove them to crime”. Therefore, punishment is directed primarily at the subordinate class as a means of control, it is crucial to recognise this when conducting research in prisons (Scott, 2008). The prison is the most visible exercise of state power in the subordination of the working-class, helping to maintain the bourgeoisie’s hegemonic position (Gramsci, 1971).

Building on the critical examination of the relations between power, punishment and identity thus far, Foucault’s (1977) study provides a further critical historical examination of power, discipline and punishment. Foucault’s (1977) study is important because it provides an examination of how the state can shape individual identity through imprisonment. He begins with an exploration into the transformation, or shift, in punishment from public corporal spectacles to imprisonment. The opening of the book provides an account of the brutal public execution of ‘Damiens the regicide’, before progressing into Faucher’s rules ‘for the House of young prisoners in Paris’. The purpose of this is to highlight the extreme contrast in the two forms of punishment. Prior to imprisonment, punishment was the public spectacle of violence against the body. Imprisonment replaced this, and in doing so, replaced the focus of punishment, now focusing on the “soul rather than the body” (Mably cited in Foucault, 1977: 16). Central to the switch was the change

in objective from avenging the crime to transforming the individual who is responsible for it.

Foucault (1977) argues the shift in punishment from public violence to prison was part of a wider social-political shift. He argues it was part of the state's focus on discipline and the subsequent organisation of large numbers of bodies into smaller spaces to complement the emergence of the industrial period. Foucault suggests this epoch required new methods of exercising power and subsequently the state introduced new institutions to control the subordinate class. The prison, the asylum, army, school, hospital, workshop and factory, all share common features where discipline is above all a "political anatomy of detail" (Foucault, 1977: 137). Foucault argues that within these institutions discipline operates on a minor level of control, focusing on individual movements and gestures as opposed to the whole body, thus increasing the efficiency of each individualised movement. This occurs through constant, uninterrupted micro-level supervision, which highlights the smallest of deviations. Discipline in this form is subsequently transferable across all the institutions and the wider social spectrum. The structure of the army provides the best example of this control, set ranks and files provide orderliness to a large quantity of individuals, allowing them to be scrutinised individually. Through these structures and disciplinary measures individual bodies can be targeted, rendering them docile and efficient, capable of independently implementing the behaviours for which they have been trained (Foucault, 1977). Indeed, augmenting Foucault, Crewe (2009: 83) states, "mundane repetition socializes habits, while symbolic representations signify to subordinates the naturalness of their predicament. Through timetabling, regimentation, and special organization, constraint is instilled in both the body and the psyche", rendering the docile body ready to work.

Foucault's (1977) study is critiqued by feminists for failing to identify gender issues. The purpose of the text was to examine how power produces subjugation through investment and control of the body, yet Foucault fails to examine the significance of gender in power relations (King, 2004). However, although Foucault does not examine the ability of power to invest, train and produce gendered bodies or how gender can impact the techniques and degrees of discipline on the body, these elements can be developed using his conceptual framework (see Bosworth, 1999). Foucault (1977) provides an examination into how the state, through its institutions, asserts power over the body. Examining this through a gendered lens, it can be

argued that state power controls social, mental and physical functions and therefore normalises expressions of masculinity into an “all-pervasive reified ideal type” (Newburn and Stanko, 1994:2). This “normalising power” (Foucault, 1977: 299) constructs an ideal expression of masculinity which serves the state’s production, political and social goals. The normative expression of masculinity, constructed in state institutions and reinforced by culture and ideology, “justifies and naturalises male domination... [assumes] a fundamental difference between men and women... assumes that heterosexuality is normal... and sanctions the political and dominant role of men in the public and private spheres” (Brittan 1989:4).

Foucault’s (1977) study is significant as it draws attention to penal development and its socio-political significance. Although he does not explore how the state produces gendered bodies, Foucault’s work provides a useful platform for examining how technologies of power can construct expressions of masculinity within state institutions. It provides a foundation to examine the prison system critically, recognising how its structuring occurred and why it does not have to remain in existence. Augmenting Foucault (1977), Sim (2009) provides a modern critical examination of the power of the state in neo-liberal punishment. This is explored in the next sub-section.

3.2.2. A contemporary critique of the relations between power, punishment and masculinities at state level

The historical critical examination of punishment discussed in the previous sub-section provided a critical understanding of the historical evolution of modern systems of punishment and an insight into how punishment can be utilised by the state to control the working-class and shape masculinities. Building on this, this sub-section provides a brief overview of the current penal context within the UK, examining how the nature of punishment throughout the period of neo-liberalism has been shaped by political influences.

Garland (2001) suggests that contemporary control of crime, in its practice and political influence, has seen a transformation. He identifies a range of significant changes in this regard, such as the decline of a rehabilitative ideal as a response to crime; the politicisation of crime discourse and policy and the subsequent emergence of criminal justice as a significant area of political contest, with public opinion prioritised over expert opinion in policy making. Furthermore, he suggests there is

continual public perception that the CJS is losing effectiveness. Finally, in relation to the prison, there has been a profound shift away from ‘penal welfarism’, community sanctioning and progressive alternatives to custody which were growing in popularity in the mid-Twentieth Century, towards a belief that the expansion of prison will be more effective (Garland, 2001). In essence, there has been a longitudinal “transition from a culture of penal-welfarism to one of control retribution and penal populism” (Crewe, 2009: 15).

Garland (2001) argues that crime has become a significant topic of political debate, resulting in an increased public belief that crime rates are rising and CJSs are ineffective. A product of this is an increased desire for punitive responses to crime and subsequently imprisonment rates rise. In reality, the rise in prison population relates more to an increase in punishment as opposed to an increase in criminality. Furthermore, Garland (1996) suggests that key facets of late-modernity, such as increasing economic inequalities, increased individualism and decline of traditional penal welfare support from the professional middle class, results in a desire for a more cost-effective prison institution and subsequent diminishment of prison conditions. In contemporary society the prison is an expression of society’s collective retribution, resulting in prisoners being viewed less as victims of social deprivation and more as dangerous individuals, responsible for their own precarious situation through rational choice and the victimisation of others (Garland, 2001). In essence, Garland (1996; 2001) argues that responsibility for crime has shifted from the state to the individual. Subsequently, increased measures of public security are prioritised ahead of rehabilitative or progressive programmes aimed at addressing offenders’ needs. As a result, the prison becomes a melting pot for those with substance abuse issues, mental health problems and the socio-economically marginalised. The increasing rate of imprisonment throughout most of Western society is pertinent in critical criminological discourse, notably focusing on the negative implications of penal expansion.

Drawing from abolitionist concepts, Sim (2009) provides a critical examination of the evolution and implementation of current penal policy, modern imprisonment and their connections to state power and politics. Sim argues that punitiveness has always occupied a central feature in British penal policy. For example, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw a Conservative government responsible for a shift in penal discourse, notably a steady decline in liberal beliefs in relation to

the prison system. During this period British penal politics supported “the continuing presence of the prison as a bulwark against the criminality and disorderly behaviour of the powerless” (Sim, 2009: 8). Sim (2009: 54-55) suggests the political support of the use of prison, alongside the Thatcher government’s vision of ‘enemies within’ society, resulted in societal beliefs that there existed a revitalised “morally dangerous underclass ... who ranged from conventional criminals to illegal immigrants and from drug takers to single parents”. This resulted in prisoners being viewed by the rest of society as the ‘enemy’. During this time, the penal landscape was characterised by misconduct of prison officers, overcrowding of the prison population and unsanitary living conditions. However, alongside Thatcher’s ‘strong state’ the UK saw a growth of prison construction, prison population and sentence length (Sim, 2009).

Sim (2009: 132) argues that the reformist approach has had some minor successes, however it possesses too many internal contradictions to create a significant and genuine long term change and it rarely challenges the “systemic discourses of punitive degradation, which underpin the prison’s culture”. Reformism largely obscures the other supposed purposes of imprisonment, particularly its (in)capacity to rehabilitate individuals and also the use of imprisonment in maintaining the existing social order. Sim argues that since the 1970s there has been a visible strengthening of state power over criminal justice proceedings, which further intensifies the punitive nature of imprisonment. Through a Foucauldian lens, Sim argues that policies aimed at rehabilitation, reformation and reduced re-offending have produced the opposite results, instead resulting in increased imprisonment and punitiveness. Within this context the “rehabilitation policies never worked because, in the majority of penal institutions, they were never actually put in practice” (Sim, 2009: 6). Sim implies rehabilitative ideals are viewed as almost optional, whereas other components of imprisonment such as punishment, exclusion and austerity are a necessity. He argues in the few examples where there have been some progressive and effective systems there has been a distinct lack of support. A good example is Blantyre House, a high performing resettlement orientated institution, which famously was raided and dismissed its governor based on extremely flawed information.

Sim (2009) provides valuable insight into the contemporary prison system as an institution in place for the powerful to manage the powerless and a state

mechanism in reproducing and expanding “social divides that are largely based on class, gender, race, and sexuality” (Sim, 2009: 8). In a similar vein to Garland (2001), Sim (2009) challenges the purpose of the current system and its stated principles of rehabilitation, arguing that the increase in focus on penal policy has resulted in a wider public demand for the punitive treatment of offenders, which has further reinforced social class divisions.

3.3 Institutional power, punishment and masculinities

The previous section examined how punishment, including imprisonment, has transformed to best suit the state’s needs during various historical periods and how punishment has been used to control those from the lower socio-economic classes. This section explores how the implementation of state power is exercised and experienced at institutional level. To achieve this, a critical examination of the intersection between power, punishment and masculinities at institutional level is conducted. This is discussed in three sub-sections: the first, explores the ‘pains of imprisonment’ (Sykes, 1958: 64), the removal of individual autonomy and how this is experienced and resisted by prisoners; the second, focuses on the implementation of institutional power by prison staff and regime; and the third, examines how the physical layout and conditions of prison convey power to prisoners.

3.3.1 Institutional power, resistance and masculinities

This sub-section starts by considering the “pains of imprisonment” (Sykes, 1958: 64), and their impact on masculinities, drawing on the work of Sykes (1958), Goffman (1961) and Crewe (2009). It then explores how men in prison may resist institutional power in an attempt to recuperate some elements of masculinity. Alongside Sykes’ (1958) detailed examination of the ‘prisoner society’ (discussed in detail in 3.4.1), he analysed the development, maintenance and implementation of power and control within an all-male prison. One of Sykes’ principal findings was that all prisoners suffered pains of imprisonment. He argued that ‘modern’ prisons had progressed beyond practices of punishment focused on bodily suffering. However, prisoners still suffered equivalent pain. Sykes argued that the institution implemented deprivations and frustrations, which affected prisoners psychologically. These deprivations defined the prison experience and affected the

individual's self-perception and how he felt others perceived him. Sykes named these deprivations and identity challenges, the 'pains of imprisonment'.

Sykes (1958: 65-78) states that the pains of imprisonment are: 'the deprivation of liberty', where prisoners lose connection to the outside world and the moral rejection from legitimate society threatens their identity. 'The deprivation of goods and services', refers to the loss of material possessions and being forced to live in "a harshly Spartan environment", resulting in an attack on the "deepest layers of personality" (Sykes, 1958: 68). 'The deprivation of heterosexual relationships', or involuntary celibacy, is 'figurative castration', again having physical and psychological impact on the prisoner. 'The deprivation of autonomy' represents the removal of senses of power, self-determination and ability to make minor decisions such as when to eat, exercise and so on. Finally, 'the deprivation of security' involves the constant interaction with violent and aggressive men, increasing feelings of anxiousness (Sykes, 1958). The need to resist the pains of imprisonment is a constant test of manhood. Through the pains of imprisonment, Sykes provides an analysis of how the power of the prison, as an institution, challenges a man's identity both physically and psychologically. He highlights how the impact of institutional power goes beyond the loss of liberty, affecting the individual's sense of self, identity and masculinity.

Sykes' (1958) account of the prisoner society and the pains of imprisonment has parallels to Goffman's (1961: 11) study of "total institutions". Goffman (1961: 11) defined total institutions as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life". He described the transition from the community to institution as civic death, once an individual entered the institution they were subjected to a series of psychological and social attacks aimed at undermining their sense of self. He argued that total institutions possess shared specific functions and characteristics, which produce similar responses and adaptations to the environment. Some of the examples of total institutions were the prison, mental hospital, boarding school and monasteries. In a similar vein to Sykes (1958), Goffman (1961) argued that the prison as an institution was a social system, largely independent of the wider outside world. He argued this was imperative in the reconstruction of the inmate and institutions were "forcing

houses for changing persons; each is a natural experiment on what can be done to the self” (Goffman, 1961: 22).

Similar to Sykes (1958), Goffman (1961) argued that the moral condemnation, loss of personal property, ostracism from wider society, removal of hair from the head, allocation of a number and compulsory uniform were ways of removing prior identities and community connections before reconstructing the individual within the institutional setting. Reconstruction in practice is a process of removal of physical and psychological autonomy through the implementation of timetabled movement and a strict regime. Goffman argued that such removal of pre-prison characteristics were micro-humiliations and assaults on the individual’s identity. The total institution was a place designed to “mortify” the self (Goffman, 1961: 14).

Crewe’s (2009) study provides one of the most significant modern accounts of the power dynamics within the prison institution, which will “come to be seen as a classic text... in prison studies” (Carlen, 2010: 980). Crewe’s (2009) account of HMP Wellingborough, similar to Sykes (1958), has two central foci, which examine the two principal relationships of power affecting prisoners: the relationship between the prisoners, institution and staff; and second, the prisoner community or inter-prisoner relationships. Crewe (2009) argues that a variety of forms of power exercised by the institution affect prisoners, such as coercive power, which is identifiable through physical incapacitation. However, while coercive power has been a visible domain of power in prisons since their creation, Crewe argues there has been a change in the way power is exercised within prison (Crewe, 2009). He argues power in contemporary prisons is not as directly oppressive as it once was, but is now “more gripping – lighter but tighter” (Crewe, 2011: 524). Crewe (2009: 10) argues that this new “soft” power requires the prisoners to govern themselves based on individualised incentive regimes and prison staff’s increased use of discretion. He argues that although there is less violence between prison staff and prisoners, this does not make the pains of imprisonment less painful. Indeed, Crewe (2011: 513-518) argues that in addition to Sykes’ (1958) ‘pains of imprisonment’, modern pains of imprisonment exist: the ‘pains of uncertainty and indeterminacy’, the ‘pains of psychological assessment’ and the ‘pains of self-government’. Crewe (2011) argues these new pains of imprisonment attempt to force new public identities on prisoners.

However, “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault, 1991: 95), and Sykes (1958) argued that because of the deprivations and pains of imprisonment, prisoners adapted and resisted the power of the institution. Sykes found that this resulted in an ‘inmate code’ emerging: a set of established acceptable forms of behaviours, values and attitudes which governed social relations within the prison in the aim of counteracting threats to personal security, but also minimising isolation. Sykes found resistance to the power of the institution manifested into a fraternal like environment as a shared coping mechanism.

Again, in a similar vein to Sykes (1958), Goffman (1961) focused on how the individual attempted to maintain their integrity or autonomy throughout the constant attack from the institution. Goffman argued that although individuals were largely isolated from the outside world they always aimed to gain more control over their cultural environment. Individuals aimed to retain some form of independent self-concept, to avoid becoming overpowered by the institution and therefore became preoccupied by their preservation of self. In the aim of doing this, they distanced themselves from the institution through removal activities, such as physical activity or education. This allowed the individuals to distance themselves from the experiences of imprisonment and maintain their pre-prison identity and self-narrative.

The intersection of institutional power, prison and masculinities is prevalent in both Sykes’ (1958) and Goffman’s (1961) work. The concept that the individual is distanced from his pre-institutional self is a central facet in both studies, and both authors argue that the resources for adjustment could be found within the institution. However, while Sykes argued it was a fraternal collective adjustment, Goffman presented a more individual approach. Goffman (1959: 1) suggests that through the “presentation of self” individuals combat institutional attempts at breaking the sense of self, by maintaining their own backstage presentation of self. The individual hides this from the institution, thus protecting it.

Phillips (2001) provides a contemporary consideration of the deprivations associated with imprisonment and how these can shape masculinities in an American prison. She argues that masculinities are reconstructed in prison as a response to an environment of extreme danger, social control and deprivation. Young men in prison cannot avail of the masculine resources normally available to them outside prison,

as a result they are forced to adapt and reconstruct their masculinities utilising the resources available to them. Building on Goffman, Phillips (2001: 13) argues that within the prison setting “manhood can be observed in its most elemental form, stripped and levelled and then refashioned within the institutional walls”. She suggests that the harsher the prison environment, the more conscious the prisoners are of their deprivations and subsequently more emphasis is placed on enacting violence and dominant expressions of masculinity. Furthermore, Phillips argues – in a similar vein to Sykes (1958) – that as a result of the deprivations and limited resources available to young men in prison, cultural rules amongst the prisoner group emerge. She suggests that the consequences for breaking the prisoner rules are “potent and clear” (Phillips, 2001: 13). As a response, the idealised expression of masculinity within the prison setting is labelled the ‘stand-up man’, characterised by stoicism and a willingness to engage in violence upon the slightest confrontation.

Some more recent studies have had similar findings, notably De Viggiani (2012) and Cesaroni and Alvi (2010). De Viggiani’s (2012) study identified that upon entrance to the prison setting men felt a desire to become socially accepted by the prisoner society. In the aim of achieving this, upon entrance to the setting men began “aligning themselves with normative values, attitudes and behaviours of prison life... striving for social legitimacy” (De Viggiani, 2012: 271). Citing Goffman’s (1959) presentation of self, De Viggiani (2012: 288) argued male prisoners adopt “front management” as a strategy of survival, portraying expressions of masculinity that were characterised by violence, aggression and exploitation in-line with the prison code. He suggested that to “to ensure emotional, psychological and social survival” and attain a legitimate social status amongst the prisoner group it was imperative to strategically mask “self-perceived weakness or vulnerability” (De Viggiani, 2012: 271). Similarly, Cesaroni and Alvi’s (2010: 303) research explores how “minor acts of subversion” and resistance to institutional power helped secure expressions of masculinity within the prison setting. The authors found that hegemonic masculinity within the institution was characterised by dismissal of emotion, standing up for oneself and conforming to the hierarchical pecking order of the prison. This was achieved through verbal threat, bullying and predatory aggression.

Augmenting Nandi (2002), Cesaroni and Alvi (2010) suggest that young men within the prison setting experience feelings of powerlessness and face challenges

within the cultural prison environment which force them to reconsider their expressions of masculinity. Characteristics of traditional masculinities in wider society, such as self-regulation and autonomy are unavailable to young men in prison. As a result, young men adopt “situationally accomplished” (Cesaroni and Alvi, 2010: 311; also see Messerschmidt, 1993) masculinities as an adaptive response to the deprivations faced in prison. Cesaroni and Alvi found that these masculinities manifested in two ways: firstly, confrontation towards institutional power, evident through physical resistance, threatening or violent behaviour towards staff and public displays of bravado. These were often “instrumental decisions” (Cesaroni and Alvi, 2010: 312) made to certify their position within the prisoner hierarchy. Secondly, subjective and expressive manifestations, such as minor acts of subversion, were embedded in subcultural values and seen as alternate forms of resistance. For example, using coded language, displaying cultural signs and symbols – hand gestures, teeth sucking – and manipulation. Alongside the confrontation of institutional power, these minor symbolic and expressive acts of subversion were used to secure expressions of masculinity.

In summary, in the aim of explaining the origins and functions of the prisoner culture, deprivation theories – also sometimes referred to as ‘indigenous’ theories (see Irwin and Cressey, 1962) – emphasise how the impact of institutional power, through intrinsic deprivations or pains of imprisonment, threaten the individual’s perception of self and subsequent masculinities. This results in the reconstruction of masculinities within the prison setting utilising specific behaviours as methods of situational accomplishment and resistance to the power of the institution.

3.3.2 Prison staff and regime

The previous sub-section highlighted how the pains of imprisonment can affect a prisoner’s identity, removing senses of power and autonomy. Prison staff are traditionally those in charge of implementing institutional regimes and thus they become the face of institutional power. This can often result in a dichotomous relationship between prisoners and staff. This sub-section explores the relationship between prisoners, prison staff and the prison regime and how this relationship contributes to the construction of masculinities within prison environments.

Hsu’s (2005) study provides an extreme example of the implementation of totalitarian institutional power by prison staff and regime and how the gendered

power relationship between prison staff, regime and prisoners can shape masculinities. Conducted in a Taiwanese prison, Hsu explores the code of conduct adopted by the prison staff in relation to their treatment of the prisoners and implementation of regime. He found the prison regime was strict and authoritarian deriving from the ambitions of the governor and his predecessors. Hsu found that the strong emphasis on security and control had manufactured an ethos amongst the prison staff, which focused on authoritarianism, power and control. Security was the primary objective, achieved through militaristic management and a “coherent occupational ethos and solidarity amongst staff” (Hsu, 2005: 7), reinforcing the authority of the governor. The nature of this strong disciplinary ethos allowed the prisoners to know exactly where they stood within the regime. There was a transparent boundary between prisoners and staff, epitomised by procedural stringency and prisoner conformity, a necessity for daily maintenance of the militaristic style of management and control.

This maintenance of control was re-affirmed through masculine discourse. For example, Hsu identified how prisoners were forbidden to exercise in their cells. Punishment for this could take the form of a disciplinary report or solitary confinement, however some officers chose to exercise control through other means:

By my rules, I would teach him a lesson instead of imposing a severe punishment. I would say “all right if you are so keen to exercise I will let you exercise”. I would order him to do fifty push-ups, and make it one hundred the next time. I have even had experience of ordering an inmate to do 350 push-ups. I think this is a man-to-man way.

In parallel to militaristic and forms of martial masculinities, the guard supposes a real man should be able to deal with this corporal method of punishment. This reinforced certain expressions of masculinity through the practice and construction of social relationships. In accordance with the hegemonic ideal (Connell, 1995), all forms of gay relationships, or behaviour that prison staff associated with being gay, were forbidden. One prison officer stated, “two prisoners using the same bed-quilt or two prisoners going hand in hand, or sitting too close together... we don’t want to see these situations happen” (Hsu, 2005: 8). The illegality of gay relationships reinforced heterosexuality and discursive power relations, which correlated with the beliefs and attitudes of the hegemonic prison staff ethos. It was evident that the prison maintained totalitarian control, sustained by a strong staff subculture along militaristic lines. Other prison rules reinforced this, for example, the gym was

restricted to staff use only, thus reinforcing the hegemonic ideal that those in control should be physically powerful, strong and fit. Physical strength is another characteristic of hegemonic masculinity utilised to maintain power and subordinate women and other men. Other studies such as Dilulio (1987), support the totalitarian implementation of power by prison staff. His research, conducted in the USA, suggests that prison staff were the government representatives within prison. He argued that staff controlled prisons and that the quality of prison life would only improve if a new paramilitary style of prison management was introduced. Dilulio suggested that maintaining order through strict totalitarian regime and strict control would certify order and rehabilitation.

While studies such as Hsu (2005) and Dilulio (1987) provide an insight into extreme examples of the implementation of totalitarian institutional power by prison staff and regime and how these gendered relationships can shape expressions of masculinity in prison, Abrams et al.'s (2008) study of a YOC in USA provides a modern example of how prison staff and regime can subtly shape masculinities in prison. Abrams et al. (2008: 30) found that prison staff explicitly validated and at times encouraged "dominant and competitive masculine ideals and behaviours". The authors found there was little encouragement from staff to prisoners to experiment with alternate expressions of masculinity. The residents were obliged to take part in athletic activities, alongside prison staff. In one example, during a basketball game, one of the more physically strong staff members played overly aggressively, did not rotate out – even though that meant that some of the residents could not play – and "hogged the ball" (Abrams et al., 2008: 30) in trying to win the game for his team. During competitive games, none of the good players were forced to rotate out, essentially reinforcing the masculine hierarchy and placing more importance on those who are physically fit and strong. In addition, this subordinated those who did not have physical ability by forcing them to sit out.

Abrams et al. (2008) explored how role modelling of competition and hierarchy in games and dorm activities reinforced the boys' routine methods of sorting themselves hierarchically in relation to competitiveness and physical size. Comments made in the presence of staff, expressing sexist and homophobic opinions, were not rebuked or corrected. Indeed, staff at times disclosed their own views, which promoted expectations for young men to be brave and strong, for example one stated "only a coward would back out of an opportunity to represent

his country” (Abrams et al., 2008: 32). Additionally, disregard for female staffs’ authority was an issue. The authors suggested that this may have stemmed from the male staff, who held assumptions that any time there were incidents of concern within the prison setting it was generally an all-female staff on duty (in essence suggesting they were not as competent as male staff). In parallel, the young men who participated in the research believed that “female staff tended to overcompensate for their lack of physical power over the residents by verbally enforcing rules and limits in the milieu” (Abrams et al., 2008: 37). Some believed that the female staff exploited their position, again supporting the ideal that physicality warrants power and dominance. There were few attempts from male staff to correct the sexist assumptions. It was evident in Abrams et al.’s findings that the institution and male staff reinforced sexist and stereotypical assumptions.

Furthermore, the institution and staff largely suppressed the young men’s individuality and attempts at achieving alternative expressions of masculinity. The institution as a whole, and in particular the living area, was completely depersonalised and undecorated. All forms of individuality in the form of decoration, clothing, music and books were limited and clothing adorned with logos or symbols regarding street or youth culture were banned, alongside the use of street or urban colloquialisms. Young men were banned from talking about drugs, fighting and gang-related experiences outside therapeutic groups and even in therapeutic groups they were provided parameters for appropriate discussion. Hence, in all settings, “authentic versions of personal identity were largely suppressed” (Abrams et al., 2008: 34).

In contrast to the findings of Hsu (2005) and Dilulio (1987) which identify the existence and implementation of totalitarian institutional power, Sykes (1958) argued that the common perception that the institution holds total dominance over prisoners was erroneous. He suggests that this is evident through the number of regular visible violations of the prison regulations by the prisoners and staff. Sykes argues institutional dominance is compromised in a number of ways for differing reasons. For order to prevail, prison officers must moderate coercion and the prisoners must actively participate in their own incarceration. He argues prisoners held no internal sense of duty to comply and no intrinsic motivation to conform to the prison regulations. In conjunction with this, rather than consistently enforcing the regulations prison staff were complicit in the compromise. The staff recognised

that official enhancement or behavioural rewarding regimes alongside punitive sanctioning of individuals was an inefficient method of behavioural control and that they were dependent on prisoners' compliance for the successful functioning of the regime. As a result, "the guard buys compliance or obedience in certain areas at the cost of tolerating disobedience elsewhere" (Sykes, 1958: 57). In addition, the staff provided unofficial rewards to prison leaders such as information about availability of good jobs or upcoming cell searches, which certified the position of the leaders in the prisoner society hierarchy and eased the overall running of the regime.

Augmenting the work of Sykes (1958), Crewe (2009; 2011) argues that staff power is now exercised differently in prisons. He argues the previous more oppressive regime often meant prisoners were afraid of staff and exposed to brutality at times, however they were largely left to their own devices. Crewe (2009) argues this has been replaced by 'soft' power, which suggests that individuals govern themselves through staffs' increased use of discretion. This new form of staff power is subsequently less visible. Crewe (2009) argues that through soft power prisoners self-regulate due to the fear the staff may use their discretion to affect the prisoner's regime, such as loss of privileges, moving landings, reduced visits, adverse reports (which may affect their sentence) and so on.

This sub-section has identified how the implementation of institutional power by prison staff and regime contributes to the construction of masculinities in prison. In particular, it has been identified how masculinities can be directly (see Dilulio, 1987; Hsu, 2005) or subtly (see Abrams et al., 2008) shaped by interactions between staff, regime and prisoners and also can be shaped as a product of compromise (see Sykes, 1958) and self-governance (see Crewe, 2009). The final sub-section below explores how institutional mechanisms of power, such as the prison design and conditions, shape expressions of masculinity.

3.3.3 Institutional design and prison conditions

The findings of Abrams et al.'s (2008) research provide a useful starting point to explore the impact of institutional design and conditions. The authors explored the construction of masculinities in the context of YOC. They found that the residents' living environment was overwhelmingly masculine in terms of its physical layout. The association area consisted of several couches that all faced the TV, which routinely featured competitive sports, discouraging discourse. Located around the

room were table tennis tables and card tables so that when a prisoner was not observing physical competition he was directly, and quite often intensely, engaged in it. This overwhelmingly competitive living space characterised life and interactions in the institution. The association area facilitated staff competitiveness where they often disparaged young men, clearly reinforcing ideals of competitiveness, for example shouting “loser” (Abrams et al., 2008: 30) at residents during table tennis games. The institutional design contributed to an emphasis on behaviours associated with hegemonic masculinity within the setting, such as competition, power and the importance of physical strength.

Crewe et al. (2014) also suggest the institutional design of prison can shape prisoner identity. The authors argue that the existence of “emotion zones” (Crewe et al., 2014: 56) provide prisoners with areas in which public displays of emotions are deemed to be more acceptable. Crewe et al. do not dismiss prison research which suggests that prisons can be sites of fear, aggression and violence, where prisoners must put on “emotional ‘masks’ or ‘fronts’ of masculine bravado which hide their vulnerabilities and deter the aggression of their peers” (Crewe et al., 2014: 56). However, they suggest that such accounts only provide a partial account of prison life and that emotion zones exist in a separate entity from the traditional ‘frontstage’ or ‘backstage’ domains prison research normally refers to (see Goffman, 1959; Jewkes, 2005; De Viggiani, 2012).

Crewe et al. (2014) identified that the main residential and public locations within the prison, such as the wings or workshops – where the prisoners were most on display to strangers – required emotion control and behaviour consideration. Indeed, many of their participants suggested that they could only relax upon returning to cells to watch TV or listen to music. These examples highlight the archetypal differences between ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’ locations described in Goffman (1959). However, the authors argued that the expression of emotions was not confined to private spaces. For example, they highlighted acts of self-harm which often occurred in private, but left wounds observable in public; or other prisoners who unashamedly released their anger and frustration in the gym. Furthermore, other participants denied publically that they held close friendships in the prison, but this was not evident in their daily practices, as some prisoners would wake each other up with a cup of tea or knock on cell walls as a symbol of goodnight wishes. The authors

argued that these behaviours were intimate and displayed more emotional accounts of prison life than traditional studies suggest (Crewe et al., 2014).

Crewe et al. (2014) argue that some areas of the prison were deemed to be outside the traditional 'frontstage' and 'backstage' classifications. The authors referred to these areas as the 'intermediate zones' or 'marginal spaces' where prisoners did not conform to the prison norms regarding emotional expression, "permitting a broader emotional register than was possible in its main residential and most public areas" (Crewe et al., 2014: 67). For example, the visits room was intrinsically different from most other areas of the prison. In this arena, it was deemed acceptable to hold children and partners lovingly and openly express emotions towards family members. In addition, many prisoners were visibly and unashamedly upset watching the visitors leave. These open displays of emotion were not acceptable public discussion upon return to landings and it was unacceptable to mock a fellow prisoner for showing compassion and vulnerability during a visit. The authors argued that this appeared to be "disqualified information", making the visiting hall a "sacred space of sorts" (Crewe et al., 2014: 67). Additionally, classrooms offered further arenas for complimentary words and pleasantries, particularly in cookery classes "where commensality was encouraged, prisoners shared food and complimented each other's efforts" (Crewe et al., 2014: 67), something which was uncommon the landings. Sociology lessons allowed prisoners to settle into 'student identities', talking openly about their views and disclosing personal details in direct conjuncture with the machismo and bravado based discourse dominant on the wings. One prisoner remarked "I think people come to education for a bit of release, [from] the behaviour bullshit and the language bullshit, and the stories bullshit" (Crewe et al., 2014: 68). The prison chapel again was described similarly as an area for 'respite' where the people were more friendly and listened (Crewe et al., 2014).

Crewe et al. (2014: 70) conclude that although Goffman's (1959) "dramaturgical framework" is helpful, it is "limited by its binary description of 'front' and 'back' stages". They argue that the demonstrable differential experiences of prisoners in their study in a variety of different arenas within the prison highlights the need for further focus on the spatial analysis of prison culture. Crucially, they argue that it is imperative to recognise that the:

...determining force of space is not just physical or architectural, but resides in the ways that places carry meanings, harbour and cultivate particular practices and sentiments, are devised for specific activities, and are populated by certain personnel. (Crewe et al., 2014: 70)

As well as the institutional design of prisons shaping masculinities, prison conditions can also challenge identity and impose significant feelings of powerlessness upon prisoners. Indeed, Sykes (1958) argued that poor conditions in prison encapsulate deprivation (Sykes, 1958) and often result in prisoners, feeling the need to (re)construct self-image as a means of resistance (Useem and Piehl, 2008). Sykes (1958) suggested that while prisons provide prisoners the basic living requirements, they largely remove the right of ownership. Given the modern social value attached to the ownership of material possessions the “deprivation of goods and services” attacks prisoners’ “deepest layers of personality” (Sykes, 1958: 67-69). Sykes (1958) argued that control and possession of the material environment are commonly understood to be indicators of a man’s worth. Due to the removal of the right to ownership, men in prison place extra emphasis on the measures of merit (Sykes, 1958). Sloan (2016) argues that the emphasised need for control over one’s material environment within prison increases the awareness of cleanliness within the prison setting. Drawing on the work of Goffman (1961) she highlights that cleaning one’s own personal space also symbolically removes the “contamination” (Sloan, 2016: 109) of the prison and the feeling of institutionalisation. Thus, poor conditions reaffirm the power of the institution and emphasise the repeated use of prison space and the lack of individuality (Sloan, 2016).

This subsection has identified how institutional mechanisms of power, such as the prisons design and conditions, shape masculinities in prison. It has been identified that the prison is a dynamic environment where emotional management is imperative (Crewe et al., 2014), but also can be affected by the physical layout of social arenas, such as association rooms (Abrams et al., 2008) and how these contribute to the construction of expressions of masculinity and subsequent emotional control.

3.4 Inter-prisoner gendered power relationships

As discussed in the previous sections, imprisonment is the state's mechanism for imposing punishment on those individuals who have broken state law. The power of the state, imposed through imprisonment, deprives men in prison senses of autonomy and control, significantly threatening their sense of identity and masculinity. Within the prison setting the prison staff are the state representatives, they exercise the power of the state by implementing the regime on prisoners (Dilulio, 1987). Men in prison may resist the regime, institution and staff, adapting to the power of the state institution. This can result in the construction of more violent and dominant expressions of masculinity, characterised by overt aggression as a means of situational accomplishment and reasserting some form of masculinity within the prison setting. Because of this, it has been argued, "all male prisons house men who settle their arguments through fear, intimidation and fighting... The culture of masculinity which pervades male prisons is all-inclusive and reinforces hierarchies based on physical dominance" (Scruton et al., 1991: 66). The following section examines these inter-prisoner gendered power relationships within the prison. The first sub-section discusses how power relations develop in prison, drawing on studies which relate to the 'indigenous/deprivation' and 'importation' of cultures prison theories. The second explores the nature of inter-prisoner power relations, looking at how and why some men become dominant and others become subordinated within the prisoner society. The third considers how damaging certain expressions of masculinity can be for men in prison.

3.4.1 Masculine culture (indigenous *and* imported)

As mentioned in sub-section 3.3.1, Sykes argued the inmate code acted as a shared measure for alleviating the pains of imprisonment through positive shared identity in the cultural prison environment. Through loyalty, respect, sharing, courage and alignment against the institution and its representatives the prisoner society could collectively deflect the moral degradation of society and reduce the impact of the psychological and practical pains of imprisonment. The inmate code promoted "silent stoicism" in which "the excessive display of emotion is to be avoided at all costs" (Sykes, 1958: 101) and the individual could maintain "integrity in the face of [institutional] privation" (Sykes, 1958: 102). Sykes therefore contended that the masculine prison culture was a product of the shared deprivations of imprisonment. This sub-section explores deprivation theories and their explanation of the masculine

culture within prisons before considering their critiques and other approaches to explaining prison culture, including importation theory.

Sykes (1958) argued that the shared deprivations and pains of imprisonment resulted in an inmate society which allocated 'argot roles' to men in relation to their expressions of masculinity. For example, those who deviated from the inmate code were labelled as a response: 'Merchants', those who profited from other prisoners. 'Toughs', those who were easily offended and responded through confrontation or violence. 'Hipsters', those who pretended to be tougher than they actually were and tried to fit into groups that they do not belong to. 'Rats', those who were informants for staff. 'Center men', those who complied with the rules of the institution and shared the views of the custodians. 'Fags', those who did not conform to the culturally normative expression of masculinity; and 'ballbusters', those who were overtly and unnecessarily aggressive with staff. The prisoner who conformed to all the collective ideals was labelled the 'real man' (Sykes, 1958: 87-102). The 'real man' recovers some of his integrity, regaining some sense of autonomy "by denying the custodians' power to strip him of his ability to control himself" (Sykes, 1958: 102). He "exemplifies inmate decorum" (Western, 2007: xii), respected by both staff and prisoners, he is capable of acting as a mediator between these groups. 'Real men' are not needlessly confrontational with the staff, who recognise the necessity of such men to the overall successful functioning and stability of the regime (Sykes, 1958). Essentially, the existence of the inmate code, alongside an unofficial rewards system, provides the possibility for a harmonious relationship between the inmates as a group and between the inmates and the staff. Sykes (1958) argued that, as well as alleviating the pains of imprisonment for men in prison, the inmate code also provided a collective coping mechanism.

However, the inmate code also provides a platform for the hierarchical structuring of expressions of masculinity in line with the hegemonic ideal. The 'real man', characterised by "silent stoicism" (Sykes, 1958: 101) is situated at the apex, while those who do not conform to the ideal are scrutinised and assigned derogatory labels, such as 'rats'. While the hierarchical structuring highlights gendered power relations amongst the inter-prisoner group, Sykes (1958) found that the relationship between the state's power, the prison and the prisoner is one that is somewhat surprising. As discussed previously, arguing that the idea that the institution holds total dominance over the prisoners was erroneous, Sykes suggested that for order to

succeed prison officers must moderate coercion and prisoners must participate in their own incarceration. He suggests that the role of the 'real man' is crucial to this compromise. The 'real man' maintains cohesion amongst the prisoner society and in return is awarded with some form of authority by the prison staff. The staff provide him with unofficial rewards, which he can distribute to other prisoners, thus reaffirming his hegemonic position amongst the inter-prisoner group.

Deprivation theories (such as Sykes, 1958; Goffman, 1961) argue that prisoners resist or adapt to relative pains of prison and a culture is created within the prison as a product of collective pain and deprivation. However, other theorists possess opposing viewpoints. For example, Clemmer (1940) argued that inmate's hierarchical status in prison largely mirrored that of their social status in wider society. He argued there were three definable groups: elite, middle-class and lower-class ('hoosiers'), the lower-classes held the least collective identity. Augmenting Clemmer's (1940) study, Irwin and Cressey (1962) present one of the most significant critiques of deprivation theories. Irwin and Cressey (1962) argue that the prison was "not a closed culture" (Clemmer, 1940: xv). Instead, prisoners 'imported' characteristics and behaviours from their respectable external communities into the prison, adapting them to the setting.

Irwin and Cressey (1962) suggest that the inmate code (proposed by Sykes, 1958) exists as part of a wider criminal code found in wider society and community life. They identify three distinct subcultures, which contribute to the melting pot of prison culture: first, the 'convict subculture', derived from men with histories of long periods in prison, from juvenile institutions through to adult prison (Irwin and Cressey, 1962: 146-148). Irwin and Cressey suggest these individuals were socialised in these institutions and were comfortable in this environment. They argue that it was common for these prisoners to seek status amongst the prisoner group and they were most likely to be involved in the illicit economy of the prison. Second, the 'thief subculture', adhered to by "professional thieves" (Irwin and Cressey, 1962: 146), characterised by trustworthiness, reliability and cool-headed. Thieves see a life beyond the institution and look for items in prison that will make their stay more comfortable, rather than seeking status among the inmate hierarchy. Finally, the 'legitimate subculture', probably the least influential within the prison, adhered to by inmates who generally complied with the institutional regime and acted in

accordance with it. Irwin and Cressey suggest that prison culture was a combination of these three subcultures and evidently a product of external prison influences.

Building on the work of Clemmer (1940) and Irwin and Cressey (1962), Jacobs (1977) further advanced importation theory. He challenged the argument that there existed one blanket inmate code, which is largely adhered to by all prisoners, identifying a prisoner community which was largely divided. Jacobs found that within 'Stateville' prison there existed multiple ethnically defined antagonistic gangs, each with individual codes of conduct and loyalty only to their respective organisations. Jacobs suggested that these prison gangs paralleled gangs which existed in wider society and their hierarchies and codes of conduct were imported into the prison from there. As a product of this, external identities became reinforced once in prison and provided a collective identity throughout the sentence. In the same vein as Irwin and Cressey (1962), Jacobs (1977) identified how external influences such as social, economic, legal and political conditions could shape and mould prison culture.

However, these two models of deprivation and importation do not have to exist in binary opposition. Utilising an example from the NI context, McEvoy (2001) identifies how shared political ideology and allegiance provided paramilitary political prisoners the structural solidarity and motivation to sustain dirty protests and hunger strikes to death in prison. McEvoy's (2001) study highlights how key tenets of both deprivation and importation theories can be applicable to prison culture. Recognisable in his research are elements of Sykes' (1958) concept of structural solidarity through common predicament; and Jacobs' (1977) ideas on imported values, networks and organisations external to the prison. McEvoy (2001) identified how political prisoners, experiencing deprivations through their imprisonment, utilised shared ideological beliefs and solidarity to resist imprisonment and their prisoner status.

Phillips' (2008) research provides further example of this. Using the conflicting theoretical frameworks, she explored the influence of identity positions on social relations between prisoners. Phillips (2008: 316) examined how the construction of masculinities within the institution "intersect with faith, nationality and locality at the individual and collective level". She found that the prisoner society was mostly – at surface level – accepting of the differences in races and

ethnicity present within the prison, with one Asian prisoner stating “it doesn’t matter if you’re black, white, Indian” (Phillips, 2008: 316). These views appeared widespread and there was a “stated abhorrence of racism”, with explicit racism deemed to be “indefensible” (Phillips, 2008: 317). She suggests that this solidarity draws parallels with Sykes’ (1958) theory, in which a prison culture exists as an “adaptive response to pains of imprisonment” (Phillips, 2008: 318).

However, upon closer inspection, many peer groups within the institution were defined by ethnicity. Additionally, Phillips found that in terms of expressions of masculinity local identification was a significant characteristic. She argues that the definition of friendship groups by both ethnicity and locality may be a product of the “residential clustering of ethnic groups within the UK” (Phillips, 2008: 323, also see Simpson, 2007). Participants described how shared local identification became the basis for the formation of friendships at Rochester. There was near universal acceptance of area-based solidarities within the prison, which often usurped or overlaid identities organized through race or ethnicity. Phillips’ account of Rochester prison highlights how both deprivation and importation theories can be used to explore prison culture. She identifies an apparent shared solidarity between prisoners against racism, and also the continued formation of friendship groups defined by local identification.

In summary, both the deprivation and importation models provide a platform for understanding the relationships between power, prison and masculinities at an inter-prisoner level. Through the deprivation model it is identifiable how prisoners respond to the loss of liberty and subsequent further pains of imprisonment collectively (Sykes, 1958) and individually (Goffman, 1961) and how these contribute to expressions of masculinity. The manner and response to these contribute to the individual’s position in the gendered hierarchy of prison culture. The importation model provides understanding of how prison culture is affected by broader social contexts and cultures (Clemmer, 1940; Irwin and Cressey, 1962) and how this contributes to the construction of masculinities within the institution. Both models provide significant contributions to the understanding of expressions of masculinity within the prison setting, and should not be seen in binary opposition to each other. Key tenets of both can be applied to provide detailed analysis of prison (McEvoy, 2001; Phillips, 2008). The understanding that both deprivation and

imported factors contribute to the construction of masculinity within the prison setting is crucial to this study (discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6).

3.4.2 Prisoners, power and hegemony

As was identified in the previous sub-section, prison cultures are influenced by both deprivations of imprisonment and wider social factors. This sub-section explores inter-prisoner gendered power relationships. Sim (1994) argues the increase in focus on men as gendered and the specific debates regarding the social construction of masculinities has created a significant new dimension to sociological theory. Prison studies in the past have largely come to focus on “men as prisoners rather than prisoners as men” (Sim, 1994: 101). He argues that prisoners’ experiences of prison life may be continuously mediated by their relationships and expectations of other prisoners and prison staff as men. A central dynamic of this experience and deeply embedded within these relationships is the use of violence in the reinforcement of hierarchical masculine structures within the prison environment.

Sim (1994) acknowledges that the culture of masculinities varies in each prison. This variance is particularly evident when comparing adult prisons and YOCs. The expressions of masculinity in adult institutions differ to the overtly violent, uncontrolled masculinities which prevail in YOCs. In adult and long sentenced prisons, “the armed robber and the professional criminal” – those who epitomise the hegemonic expression of masculinity in prison – stand at the ‘apex’ of the hierarchical structure, whilst “their antithesis, the child sex murderer, flounders at the bottom” (Sim, 1994: 104). While the hierarchical structure in adult male prisons is based upon dominance, power and propensity to engage in violence, YOCs offer differing expressions of masculinity. Masculinities within these institutions are often characterised by persistent bullying, psychological intimidation and regular physical violence. These factors contribute to an environment which places extreme emphasis on everyday decisions and behaviours, subsequently resulting in “lives controlled and bodies and minds sometimes broken and destroyed” (Sim, 1994: 103).

Toch (1998) concurs, arguing that male prisoners subscribe to a culturally normative expression of masculinity which requires that certain circumstances within the prison setting require a violent response. Supporting his argument Toch cites former long-term prison “denizen” Victor Hassine, “if you choose to ignore the

theft, the man will steal from you again and tell his friends, who in turn will steal from you. Eventually, you will be challenged for more than just minor belongings” (Hassine, 1996: 23, cited in Toch, 1998: 168). Toch (1998: 169) argues that for the victim, asking for help or overlooking the affront are not options, as failure to retaliate “justifies future victimisation”. He argues there are parallels with the staff culture, one assumption is that if a prisoner assaults an officer he “must be taught a lesson” (Toch, 1998: 169) by another member of staff. Toch suggests there is a culture of violence closely integrated with masculinities in the prison setting. He argues “worthy men” are expected to “defend their honour” when it is challenged or disputed, required to react to confrontation and deter victimisation through public demonstrations of violence and aggression. Juxtaposing this, “unworthy men” (Toch, 1998: 170) ignore challenges and seek assistance. In the prison setting, masculinities are measured upon men’s willingness to engage in violence.

Toch (1998) augments Sim’s (1994) argument that youth custody institutions accentuate violent expressions of masculinity, arguing that “hypermasculinity” (Toch, 1998: 168) prevails in young prisoners. Hypermasculinity is described by Mosher and Tompkins (1988: 69) as: “head held high, daring anyone to match his bravery, toughness, and callousness, the young macho celebrates his pride and arrogant contempt for the weak and submissive inferior... his ideology of machismo tells him so”. Toch (1998), alongside Mosher and Tompkins (1988), argued that hypermasculinity and violence reach their summit at a relatively young age and that men realise their decreased capacity to engage in violence as they age. Thus, through their discussion on hypermasculinity, they highlight important themes in prison violence, suggesting that those who display fear or apprehension will become targets of victimisation and that status can be attained through public displays of violence.

However, despite the dominant and violent characteristics of hegemonic expressions of masculinity in some prisons, some prisoners engage in individual and collective strategies of dissent and express masculinities that are not based on violence and domination. Indeed, statistics collected by Scraton et al. (1991: 68) identified a culture of fear within Peterhead’s prisoner group, with 86 percent of research participants saying they did not “feel safe” and 62 percent saying fear was a “predominant factor” in their prison life. Their findings highlighted that prisoners were not always exploitive of one another and prisoners who were frightened of receiving a beating or had been beaten in the past showed compassion when

observing other prisoners receiving this form of brutality. Furthermore, Scraton et al. (1991: 75) argue that their interviews highlighted “poignant accounts of suffering in which the most hardened man identified with the anguish of another but remained frustrated and angry at the indifference of the institution and its officers”. Sim (1994: 112) also identified other expressions of masculinity within the prison setting which did not conform to the violent norm, these masculinities could be achieved through the pursuit of educational attainment, devout knowledge of the prison rule book, becoming a “jailhouse lawyer” or simply “categorically refusing to engage or coercive behaviour”.

In a similar vein to Scraton et al.’s findings, Ricciardelli et al. (2015: 493) identified how hegemonic expressions of masculinity within the prisoner group can be constructed in relation to traditionally considered “‘feminine’ feelings of risk, uncertainty, and vulnerability”. The authors suggested that the volatile and antagonistic prison setting shapes masculinities in a more nuanced way than traditional prison masculinities literature suggests. They found that expressions of masculinity were shaped as a response to the varying risks and uncertainty associated with imprisonment. For example, some participants reported the need to portray a tough image because of fear of being violently attacked. Ricciardelli et al. argued that masculinities in prison may be constructed in accordance with the perceived risks within varying institutions. In the more violent prison institutions, perceptions of risk of physical attack are heightened, as a result “prisoners may be more likely to use overstated aggressive masculine presentations to minimize harm”, this in turn “exacerbates the existing physical risks” resulting in the reproduction of violent expressions of masculinity (Ricciardelli et al., 2015: 509). Significantly, the authors argued that traditional prison masculinities literature utilises the ‘hegemonic’ label too frequently, suggesting that ‘masculine’ displays of characteristics traditionally associated with hegemonic masculinities could, in some circumstances, be closer linked to the characteristics associated with subordinated masculinities (Ricciardelli et al., 2015).

Evans and Wallace’s (2008) study further evidences the range of masculinities present within the prison setting. They identified how prisoners fall into three distinct prison groups: firstly, accepting and internalising the normative codes of hegemonic masculinity; secondly, growing up adhering to these codes, but transforming them through significant life points into something ‘softer and gentler’;

and thirdly, defining their sense of self outside hegemonic norms and subscribing to an alternative form of masculinity. The researchers argued that the first group was characterised by Garde's (2003) four features of traditional masculinity: power, ambivalence to femininity, domination and objectification of others and dismissal of emotion. However, one of the participants highlighted the danger of these hegemonic expressions of masculinity, suggesting that they could be a "prison within a prison" (Evans and Wallace, 2008: 484), forced to dismiss emotions and keep everything locked inside. The second group, the "softer, gentler men" (Evans and Wallace, 2008: 498), initially internalised hegemonic masculine norms, however through a certain turning point experience, they had begun to reconstruct their masculinities, displaying a desire to express themselves emotionally and receive emotional support. The third group had never possessed the characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity and regarded themselves as men outside these definitions. However, they were aware "of being rather circumspect in how this side of them was displayed to other men" (Evans and Wallace, 2008: 498).

In summary, this sub-section provides an insight into the nature of hierarchical inter-prisoner gendered relations within the prison context. Research suggests that within institutions, particularly amongst younger offenders, hegemonic expressions of masculinity can be characterised by violence, bullying and intimidation (Sim, 1994; Toch, 1998). It has been identified that these characteristics could be methods of 'doing masculinity' as a means of avoiding victimisation (Ricciardelli et al., 2015). It is important to recognise that these are not the only expressions of masculinity found within prison environments, gentler and softer expressions can be achieved upon the realisation that the hegemonic expression can be damaging for individuals (Evans and Wallace, 2008). The damaging nature of certain expressions of masculinity is explored in the final sub-section.

3.4.3 The impact of masculinities on men's experiences of prison

The previous two sub-sections have explored the hierarchical nature of gendered relations in prison and how these relations are a product of the deprivations of imprisonment and wider social issues which relate to men in prison. This sub-section explores how certain expressions of masculinity present within the prison setting can have a damaging impact on men's experiences of prison and can be damaging to men in general. Woodall's (2007) qualitative study explores the significant barriers

to positive mental health within a YOC and also the experiences and management of mental health within the institution. Woodall identified a strong masculine ethos amongst the prisoners, where feelings and emotions were rarely expressed, contributing to mental health issues. This was evident in a focus group where three young men said they felt uncomfortable talking in the group environment and asked could they talk in private instead. Woodall suggested that support services within the prison were ineffective and also had a stigma attached to them. For example, the Listener and Samaritan services in place were rarely utilised as the other young men generally found out who used the services and it was viewed amongst peers as a sign of weakness and vulnerability. Woodall argues that unwillingness to utilise mental health support services resulted in a high level of aggression and violence in the prison. This was due to a build-up of frustration and the young men's inability to express themselves or the pain they were feeling. Woodall argues that prison should facilitate opportunities to cultivate a sense of personal development without prisoners harming themselves or others (Woodall, 2007). However, the contradictory nature of the system ensures that imprisonment by its very nature has a detrimental effect on mental health (Smith, 2000).

Vaswani's (2014) study had similar findings. She explored the prevalence, nature and impact of bereavement on young men in a YOC in Scotland. She made connections between expressions of masculinity, mental health issues and the bereavement process. Experiences of bereavement were extraordinarily high in the young men, 91 percent had experienced bereavement and the rates of traumatic and multiple deaths were also high. A total of 162 bereavements had been experienced between 33 young men (an average of 5.4 per participant, ranging from one bereavement to 18), with young men who had experienced more 'difficult' bereavements scoring higher on the mental health screen than those who had not. Vaswani highlights that young people involved in offending possess higher rates of experiences of bereavements than the general adolescent population (also see Youth Justice Trust, 2003). Vaswani (2014) identified stoical expressions of masculinity among many of the young men. These young men felt it was best that they just "get on with things" (Vaswani, 2014: 350) and often displayed a dispassionate attitude towards death. Many took their cue from their parents, particularly fathers, who tended to subscribe to the school of thought that "men don't cry" (Vaswani, 2014: 351). Not talking to others about feelings and emotions was a recurring theme in the

young men's lives, including within the family environment. The young men felt that this was often with the good intention of protecting them by shielding them from pain. However, the non-discussion of feelings and emotions was carried forward to the prison environment, where open expression of emotion was even less likely. The dominant macho culture did not promote the display of any form of vulnerability or weakness, and the young men tended to put on a front in order to maintain their status. Drawing on literature to support her argument, Vaswani indicates that men do not seek help even when they are in severe emotional distress or at crisis point, a finding that is often attributed to poor emotional and mental health literacy (also see Möller-Leimkühler, 2002; Sayers et al., 2004). Many of the young men in Vaswani's study had experienced multiple bereavements and in such instances death had become an inevitable part of the young men's worldview. Participants felt that bereavement exacerbated any existing difficulties that they were having with family, behaviour or substances.

Drawing from the findings of Woodall (2007) and Vaswani (2014; also see Sloan, 2016), it is evident that there is a perception among some men that poor mental and physical health threaten male autonomy. Control over the self and repression of any signs of weakness are key aspects of hegemonic expressions of masculinity. As a result, men may neglect or hide any forms of mental or physical vulnerability even in times of severe emotional distress (Möller-Leimkühler 2002; Vaswani, 2014). Some studies such as Jones (2007) highlight connections between not being able to express oneself and methods of coping. Jones found similarities between the use of self-harm and other coping methods such as the use of drugs or alcohol (arguably another form of self-harm) and found that self-harm provided the young men a means of forgetting their problems, calming them down, blocking everything out and coping with stress in prison (also see Haines et al, 1995; HMIP, 1999).

Similarly, Liebling (1995: 183) argues that research shows a "clear link between the pain of imprisonment and harm (self-harm or suicide)". This link is often associated with isolation, poor support networks in prison and limited communication with friends and family (Babiker and Arnold, 2001; Powis, 2002). However, self-harm for some young men can be utilised as a form of self-medication, used to treat emotions of fear, shame and desperation (Arnold and Magill, 2000). Self-harm can be a means of relieving these pains, potentially

providing a protective function turning them away from suicide (Babiker and Arnold, 2001; Morton, 2004). Indeed, Favazza (1996: xix) describes it as a “morbid form of self-help”, a way of experiencing physical pain instead of psychological pain (Snow, 2002). It is evident from research that self-harm can be used by young men to cope with the rigours of imprisonment. It may also be used as a means of providing alternatives to feeling psychological pain, an alternate avenue to substance misuse (Snow, 2002; Morton, 2004) and suicide (Babiker and Arnold, 2001; Morton, 2004; Howard League, 2001). Self-harm in prison can provide individuals with feelings of control over their body, identity and environment when faced with a loss of autonomy and feelings of powerlessness (Arnold and Magill, 2000; Cooke et al, 1990; Favazza, 1996).

This is not to say that the only reason men in prison self-harm is connected to masculinities. However, studies highlight that inability to express oneself is at times a contributing factor. Drug use is also a popular coping mechanism within prison, in the same vein as self-harm, connections can be made to masculinities. Drug use in prison can be used as a means for prisoners to avoid or escape their problems such as the use of cannabis to relieve stress, relax, help sleep or pass time (Cope, 2003; Crewe, 2009). Studies suggest that using drugs passes time for inmates and offers them something to do while locked in a cell, albeit many prisoners’ habits commence within the community where drugs provide users with an escape from physical space and feelings of structural inequality (McAuley, 2000). Another issue associated with drugs in prison is their contribution to the informal market. Drugs are often reported to be a source of bullying, with those in debt being pressured to traffic in drugs or other illicit goods (De Viggiani, 2012).

In summary, this sub-section draws from the insight provided in the previous sub-section into how the dynamics of power and masculinity contribute initially to hierarchical structuring, highlighting how this can negatively affect the prison experience. These normative expressions of masculinity are largely damaging to men and can be significant factors to mental health problems, self-harm and drug use.

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided an in-depth examination of the relationship between power, punishment and masculinities at state, institutional and inter-personal level. The first section provides a critical insight into the relationship between state power, punishment and masculinities, exploring critically the historical development of punishment into its modern penal format. The section highlights how crime and punishment are separate entities, which are subject to change in relation to the state's economic based demands. The nature and style of punishment are contextual and are arguably used to monitor and control the lower socio-economic classes. In the modern era, Sim (2009) and Garland (2001) highlight how punishment in the form of prison has become a central element of political discourse and contributed to an insatiable public demand for punitiveness. The first section also highlighted how oppressive state power contributes to the construction of an economically marginalised expression of masculinity, characterised by frustration and powerlessness. The nature of capitalist society serves to certify expressions of economically dominant masculinity, which believe in male domination over women, but also other expressions of masculinity.

The second section narrows the focus to the institutional level, examining power relations between the institution (its staff, regime, layout and conditions), prisoners and masculinities. Building upon the elements of power examined at state level, the section examines the pains of imprisonment inflicted on prisoners, how damaging these can be to masculinities and how prisoners resist and adapt in an attempt to recuperate some form of masculine identity. This section is also crucial in providing an exploration of how mechanisms of institutional power, implemented by staff and regime can be authoritarian, but mostly are exercised through compromise. In addition, this section helped highlight how expressions of masculinity within the prison setting can be impacted by the institutional design of prisons and prison conditions. Poor prison conditions further highlight to prisoners their subordinate and deprived position.

The final section explores inter-prisoner power relations present within prison settings. This section provides the thesis with an understanding into how prison culture and expressions of masculinity are products not only of the structural deprivations of imprisonment but also the wider social conditions, which permeate the prison walls. The last section provides an insight into the emergence of a

gendered hierarchy within prison environments and how this is maintained. In practice, the hegemonic expression of masculinity within the prisoner group is situated at the top of the hierarchy, characterised by dominance, violence and dismissal of emotion, resulting in the subordination of other expressions of masculinity, particularly those who are guilty of sexual or child related offences. This section also highlights the restrictive and damaging impacts of expressions of masculinity found in prison on men who may neglect health related issues, as they are perceived to be a sign of weakness. As a result, some men resort to drug use and self-harm as a means of coping and expressing emotion. Building on the previous chapters, the following chapter provides an overview of the methodology and research methods adopted by this study. It also considers the role of the researcher in the research, alongside some potential limitations of the study.

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research process undertaken for this study. Taking a chronological approach, it discusses the process from beginning to end. The chapter begins by discussing profeminism and the importance of critical studies when researching masculinities. Following this, the chapter identifies the methodology adopted by the study, including an overview of the research methods utilised. It then explores the fieldwork process, considering initially the ethical considerations and navigation of access to Hydebank, before discussing the fieldwork itself. The discussion covers the recruitment and demographic of the research participants alongside some reflection on the research. The reflection includes an exploration of the varying identities adopted by the researcher during the fieldwork and the consideration of some of the research realities and limitations. Finally, the data analysis process is discussed before concluding with a summary of the chapter and its importance to the study.

4.2 The critical study of masculinities

Feminism now, as in the past, entails a wide variety of different perspectives and approaches (Beasley, 1999). However, the core value underpinning the varying strands is the common goal of achieving equal social, political and economic rights of women (Epstein, 2014). During the 1970s the Second Wave of feminism developed, again diverse, but united in the belief that women shared experiences of inequality and oppression, feminists challenged masculine ideologies, ethics and values. While feminist campaigns were primarily organised by women, some men openly supported women's fight for gender equality and declared solidarity with the movement (Ashe, 2007).

In parallel with the feminist movements, groups began to emerge supporting a new formation of political activism surrounding men's gender identity. These groups took antifeminist (aimed at combating and overturning the feminist movement) and profeminist (aligning themselves with the feminist standpoint) forms (Ashe, 2007). Profeminists argue that gender and sexual equality are fundamental democratic objectives and women should have the same rights and

opportunities as men. In order to attain these objectives, profeminist men have engaged in a large scale critique of masculinities, manhood and men's gender identity construction (Kimmel, 2014).

The politics of profeminism is largely orientated towards the assembling of strategies which force an examination and change in normative expressions of masculinity and gendered power relationships. Men involved in the politics of profeminism generally agree that the starting point for their activism should be the critical examination of masculinities and their construction. Profeminist politics emphasises discourse on lifestyle, everyday life, culture, morality and identity. It is a politics which examines power relations both macro and micro. Masculinities are seen by profeminists to be a site for gender politics and political engagement. Prior to the Second Wave of feminism, expressions of masculinity such as the protector/provider were the normative expression, they were the expression by which others were judged and expected to aspire. Much of profeminist politics focuses on the discourse of the normative and regulatory constitution of men's power which is seen to be the central variable in the reproduction of women's inequality. Profeminism has also focused on challenging the hierarchical nature of masculinities and highlighting how damaging this can be to alternative expressions of masculinity (Ashe, 2007).

The researcher has been influenced by profeminist literature and believes that gender and sexual equality are fundamental democratic objectives. He recognises that existing and historical constructions of normative expressions of masculinity, centred on gendered regimes of power and dominance, have been damaging to the equality of women and other masculinities. Furthermore, he supports the profeminist argument that the starting point in achieving gender and sexual equality must be the critical examination of masculinities and their construction. In correlation, this research acknowledges the importance of the profeminist stance in the study of young men and masculinities. These beliefs have provided the researcher with the motivation for conducting this study and engaging in the critical examination of masculinities in the prison context. With these factors in mind, to critically examine expressions of masculinity within Hydebank, this research adopted an ethnographic framework, involving both observation and semi-structured interviews. The combination of observation and interviews within the prison setting allowed the researcher to gain a holistic insight into the evolution and maintenance of

expressions of masculinity within the prison setting. The two methods facilitated: observation into how frontstage characteristics of masculinities such as dominance, bravado and machismo were expressed in a group dynamic; but also through the one-to-one interviews, explore the backstage expressions of masculinity, the private sense of self held by individuals (Goffman, 1959; Giddens, 1984). These methods provided valuable insight into young men's subjective perspectives of imprisonment, uncovering vulnerabilities such as bullying, mental health issues and struggles with substance misuse and addiction; issues that they often do not feel comfortable expressing in a group situation, as they may be perceived to be a sign of weakness. The following section discusses these methods, the ethnographic framework and relevant theory in greater detail.

4.3 The ethnographic approach

Following on from the discussion regarding profeminism and its importance in the stance of the study, this section provides an examination of the ethnographic methodology and the corresponding research methods adopted for this study.

4.3.1 Ethnography

Ethnography as an approach to social research does not have one distinct standardised format or definition because of its utilisation in numerous varying areas of research including: anthropology, sociology, psychology and human geography. Moreover, it is influenced by a range of theoretical ideas such as feminism, Marxism, functionalism, phenomenology, constructionism and post-structuralism. In spite of this, the term retains core principles. However, it is important to identify the form of ethnography that has been adopted for this study (Hammersley, 1998).

Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007: 3) definition of ethnography best supports the approach adopted for this research. They suggest that ethnography possesses most of the following characteristics: it is the study of participants' accounts and actions in their everyday context or "in the field". It includes the collection of data from a range of sources, with participant observation usually the primary source. Additionally, the collection of data in ethnographic research is mostly "unstructured", in that it does not possess a "fixed and detailed research design" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 3) specified at the start. Furthermore, in

ethnographic research, the categories utilised for interpreting what participants say are generated out of the process of analysis as opposed to being predetermined prior to the research starting. The focus of ethnography is usually on a small-scale, often in a single setting or focusing on a group of people to facilitate an in-depth study. Finally, “the analysis of the data involves the interpretation of the meanings, functions and consequences of human actions and institutional practices” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 3) and how these can be implicated in local and wider contexts. Drake et al. (2015: 3) augment Hammersley and Atkinson’s (2007) definition, arguing that prison ethnography should be “a form of in-depth study that includes the systematic and impressionistic recording of human cultural and social life in situ. It includes observing and/or interacting with people as they go about their everyday lives, routines and practices”. They argue that it is not a fully formed product, but rather manifests in a variety of forms over the lifetime of the research, it is not an “-ology but a -graphy, tending towards the arts of depiction rather than the science of discovery”, which takes time and is an attentive patient approach (Drake et al., 2015: 3).

Beyond the practicalities of ethnographic data collection, the nature of ethnographic texts has been paid increased attention in modern literature, resulting in an increased consciousness about how ethnographic data is interpreted and presented. As a result, there have emerged numerous approaches to ethnographic writing, several of which may even be adopted in one text. This chapter provides a brief overview of the most common approach, ethnographic ‘realism’ or ‘naturalism’, before presenting the ‘reflexive’ approach adopted by this research. The evaluation of both approaches provides an insight into the decision to adopt the ‘reflexive’ approach, and highlight its advantages over the ‘realist’ approach in researching the prison environment.

The realist approach presents an account of the environment or specific event that gives the reader the impression that they are there observing it themselves. In these descriptive accounts “the researcher is often absent from these portrayals as if he or she was merely a ‘camera’” (Hammersley, 1998: 21). The rationale behind this is that through a naturalistic approach the research will provide an authentic description of participants’ complex social worlds from which theories can emerge (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Essentially, the researcher is an impersonal narrator who relays objective data in a measured intellectual style “uncontaminated

by personal bias, political goals or moral judgements” (Van Maanen, 1988: 47). These narratives or narrative-like accounts provide more precise descriptions of phenomenon and attempt to provide the “native point of view” (Malinowski, 1922: 25) through the inclusion of quotations from participants. However, the approach maintains the researcher’s “interpretive omnipotence” (Van Maanen, 1988: 53); they always have the last word in what is included and how it is portrayed.

Some theorists argue that it may be misguided to try and provide an account which captures reality (Hammersley, 1998; Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999), because that approach assumes that there is an independent reality to uncover in the first instance (Hammersley, 1992; May, 1997). Moreover, it assumes that if there is such a reality, that researchers are capable of providing accurate and authentic descriptions of it. The approach is critiqued by some who argue that the accounts which emerge from such studies are generalisations of the participants’ extremely complex lives. To assume that the researcher is capable of providing an objective, uncompromised, valid account of a phenomenon is problematic (Hammersley, 1992; Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999), especially when the account or description purported is debated by, or not parallel to, the beliefs of the participants (Bruyn, 1966). In essence, it is argued that ethnographers cannot be impersonal, totally subjective biographers as they carry their own opinions and values into the field with differing notions regarding theory and concepts (Van Maanen, 1988). Therefore, a realist account is an analysis with a particular style of presentation rather than an authentic representation of reality (Hammersley, 1992). Realism claims “a transparency of representation it cannot deliver, of presenting as neutral and comprehensive what are very particular and politically loaded points of view, and of seeking to control the interpretations of readers” (Hammersley, 1995: 87).

In consideration of the longstanding critiques of naturalist ethnographic accounts, alternative approaches have emerged, mostly based on social constructionist and relativist perspectives, aiming at providing an interpretivist account of phenomenon where individuals independently and uniquely interpret the world around them (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1992; Hammersley, 1995). From this perspective, the participants and researcher are both subjects with individual perspectives, therefore there exists a variety of unique and subjective interpretations and not one valid, correct account suitable for generalisation (Hammersley, 1995). It has been argued that a collaborative approach to ethnographic research is

necessary, where the researcher is unable to avoid bringing their own prejudices and opinions to the research, so they combine them with that of the participant (Gadamer, 1976), enriching the research through the combination of personal values and beliefs (Nielsen, 1990).

As a result of critiques regarding the subjectivity of naturalist ethnographic research, studies began to take a ‘reflexive’ approach. In reflexive ethnographic studies, the researcher acknowledges their own identity, values and social status relative to the participants. The researcher identifies the impact their identity may have on the interactions between the researcher and participants, the collection of data and interpretation of results (O’Connell-Davidson and Layder, 1994). Central to a reflexive approach is acknowledging “that we are part of the social world we study” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 14). A reflexive approach aims to achieve a non-hierarchical and reciprocal relationship with the participants (Nielsen, 1990; Mies, 1993) and a positive identification with them (Mies, 1993). In the reflexive approach the researcher becomes a subject of the research and may include the participants in research design or interpretation of early findings in an effort to be reflexive. This approach ultimately increases the trust and rapport built between the participants and researcher, which is important when researching socio-economically marginalised participants where there may be a status gap between them and the researcher (Mies, 1993).

It is important to recognise the limitations of an ethnographic approach, as Hammersley (2015) argues, some theorists (such as King, 2000) suggest that an ethnographic approach provides “ethnographic imperative” (Hammersley, 2015: 22), an assertion that direct contact with participants through participant observation provides the only means of attaining a true understanding of a social phenomenon. In addition, some theorists claim “epistemic privilege” (Hammersley, 2015: 22), that ethnography, particularly participant observation, provides a superior understanding of the phenomenon. It is often argued, that involvement in a social setting provides access to data that cannot be collected in any other way and therefore provides the only genuine understanding of phenomenon. Hammersley (2015) recognises the strengths of the reflexive approach, in getting closer to a phenomenon, providing detailed information and an enhanced understanding. However, he argues that at times these sound epistemological arguments can be pushed too far and “ethnographic imperative” and “epistemic privilege” (Hammersley, 2015: 35) can

be associated with this. He argues these concepts must be abandoned and states “there is no hierarchy of methods: different approaches tend to have varying advantages and disadvantages; none is superior on all accounts ... but there are better and worse approaches for answering particular questions” (Hammersley, 2015: 35-36). Therefore, while the researcher in this study argues that the utilised methods best suited the research conducted, he acknowledges there are a multiplicity of methods and approaches available, and suited, to conducting research within the prison setting, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. An ethnographic approach does not necessarily provide epistemic privilege. In correlation with the ethnographic framework, this study has adopted research methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. These will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.3.2 Participant observation

Observation is the most common approach to ethnographic research (Fielding, 2001) and it is characterised by “the first-hand involvement of the researcher(s) with the social action as it occurs” (Pole and Lampard, 2002: 71). Approaches to observational research vary along a spectrum in relation to participation, from full participant to non-participant and levels of participation can vary even within one study. This is possible through the malleable nature of the researcher’s role and identity in relation to the varying circumstances and situations which occur throughout the research period (Bennett, 2015). Gold (1958: 217) is regularly referenced in relation to this continuum of participation. He identifies four roles which a researcher can adopt in relation to their level of participation with the research subjects. These roles are: ‘complete participant’, where the researcher takes on an insider role, is fully part of the setting and usually adopts a covert role; ‘participant as observer’, where the researcher is fully engaged with the participants who are aware of the researcher’s position; ‘observer as participant’ in which the researcher is primarily an observer, however there is some limited interaction between the researcher and participants; ‘complete observer’ where the researcher does not take part in the social setting at all. Given the research aims of this study, it was deemed that participant observation would be the best approach. The role the researcher adopts in participant observation is also of utmost importance as discussed below.

Throughout the fieldwork period it can safely be established that the researcher could not classify himself as a prisoner and therefore not as a complete participant. However, he did not observe the young men from a distance, but was involved in the research setting in a variety of capacities including participation in: recreational activities, vocational training, educational classes and association times (discussed in greater detail in sub-section 4.5.2). Therefore, in relation to the level of participation of the researcher, it is argued that he, under Gold's (1958) typology, falls under the two intermediary definitions, varying between the two at varying stages of the research.

Observational research provides the researcher with the opportunity to gain a close familiarity with a group of prisoners, their practices, needs and experiences and also allows an understanding as to why certain values, opinions and situations emerge in this particular environment (Jorgensen, 1989). In relation to this study, as identified by Jorgensen (1989), observational research would provide the most effective means of exploring the varying expressions of masculinity existent within the prison setting. By spending time within the cultural environment, not only would the researcher gain an insight into the young men's subjective perspectives of prison life, but would also witness cultural displays of masculinities, often reported to be common within prison settings. The research had no proposed hypothesis, rather the researcher adopted an approach utilised by Abrams et al. (2008), where the researcher enters the field with the aim of seeking an understanding of the prisoners' experiences of prison life and how these are shaped by the expressions of masculinity. The researcher gains this understanding from an inductive standpoint, letting the inter-personal interactions and subjective perspectives of the young men, alongside the general regime of prison life, guide the findings.

To maintain an account of the observations the researcher maintained a research journal on his computer. In order to do this effectively, he carried a small note pad and pen throughout the fieldwork period for recording detailed and in-depth field notes during and after each period of observation. If the researcher did not take notes at the time, he ensured he recorded the field notes as soon as possible after observation to ensure as accurate an account as possible of the physical setting, the social environment and social interactions were recorded. The field notes included descriptions of: the overall environment and atmosphere of the prison on the particular day; the interactions between staff members and residents; residents'

interactions between each other and as a group; and also interactions between staff members. The researcher also took note of his own reactions and thoughts regarding the interactions he witnessed. Nothing was video or audio recorded during the observations. The field notes were written in unstructured format, including both descriptive and reflexive material, noting the researcher's reactions to environments and events. The field notes have been used to supplement the interview data and every effort has been taken to ensure that no information which would potentially identify a participant has been included. The other principal method, which complemented participant observation, was semi-structured interviews. These are discussed below.

4.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

Alongside participant observation, the ethnographic framework for this study included semi-structured interviews with 26 young men in the prison and six prison staff (recruitment and demographic of participants discussed in greater detail in section 4.5). Semi-structured interviews consist of questions that are primarily open ended, encouraging participants to talk more freely (Dantzker and Hunter, 2011), differing from structured interviews which are characterised by a strict predetermined set of questions which all must be asked in the same order to all participants in the research project (Crowther-Dowey and Fussey, 2013). In unstructured interviews, the emphasis is on the participant, allowing them to talk about their own life and ideas from their own perspective, guiding the topics of conversation in whatever direction they choose. There may be no questions asked by the researcher or only one to begin the interview (Edwards and Holland, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are conversational and flexible in nature, containing a series of predetermined questions. However, the order of these questions and the exact wording of them are not critically important. Instead, the researcher prioritises the interviewee, allowing them to feel that they are having a conversation as opposed to responding to someone as the subject of research. The rationale supporting this is that when a participant is more comfortable and conversational more information can be gathered (Vito et al., 2014).

The researcher made a conscious decision prior to beginning fieldwork not to mention to the participants that the findings would be examined through the lens of critical masculinities studies. This decision was two-fold, primarily because the

primary focus of the study was to examine and identify the needs and experiences of young men in prison. Secondly, as anticipated prior to beginning the fieldwork, the researcher gained a close familiarity with the young men. He did not want this relationship to influence the response of the participants by introducing or imposing his own or other preconceived definitions of masculinities on participants or encourage a response from young men aimed at pleasing the researcher.

In summary, the combination of semi-structured interviews and participant observation allowed the researcher to gain a holistic insight into the prison experience. In relation to masculinities, it provided access to both the frontstage presentation of masculinities displayed to other prisoners and staff in the group environment and also the backstage presentation, the private sense of self held by individuals (Goffman, 1959; Giddens, 1984). The combination of these methods provided the research with a holistic sense of the needs, attitudes and experiences of young men situated within Hydebank. Upon concluding that the ethnographic methodology and subsequent methods would be most appropriate for this study it was necessary to consider the principal ethical considerations associated with the methods chosen and research with prisoners in general. These ethical considerations are identified and discussed in the following section.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Once the ethnographic methodology and research methods had been confirmed it was necessary to attain ethical approval for the approach. This was an extensive and, for the researcher, gruelling process spanning twelve months, beginning in April 2015 and securing final approval from both Ulster University and NIPS in April 2016. The process began in April 2015 when the researcher and his primary supervisor met with the then Governor of Hydebank to propose the ethnographic methodology. The Governor was supportive of the research, as long as it was approved by the NIPS. Following the meeting, the formal application process began. In order to apply for ethical approval from the NIPS the researcher first had to secure approval from the Ulster University Research and Ethics Committee (UUREC). As part of this process, prior to submitting the application to the committee, the application must be reviewed and approved by the Ulster's School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences (SASPS) ethics committee. The application was approved by

the faculty in December 2015, however concerns were raised in relation to informed consent and how this could be achieved in the participant observation of the participants. In the application the researcher had stated that he would get consent forms signed by all of the young men who would be participating in the research. The SASPS ethics committee felt that this would not be possible due to the ever changing demographic of prisoners and regime of the prison and it was suggested that individual verbal consent would be sufficient. Following this approval, the researcher submitted his formal applications to NIPS and UUREC (an extensive 38-page document) in January 2016.

The research team met with UUREC in February 2016, the issue regarding the informed consent of all of the participant observation participants was again raised. The committee considered that it would be difficult to seek individual verbal consent from all observation participants. They also raised concerns in relation to the disclosure of mental health, self-harm or other concerning issues by the participants to the researcher. In addition, UUREC raised concerns regarding the impact of the research on the researcher and the availability of support to the researcher. Interestingly, in relation to the latter concern, one of the members of the panel identified that the researcher, as a young man himself, may be susceptible to characteristics of stoical expressions of masculinity and potentially may refuse to recognise the impact of the research on his own mental health.

In response to these concerns the researcher suggested the principle of implied consent for the observational research, where the researcher explained to all the young men in small groups the nature of the research and provided them with the possibility to object to being involved in the research should they wish not to be included (this is discussed in more detail in the following section). In response to the other claims, the researcher made himself aware of all of the relevant support available in the prison and within the community and advised the participants, verbally and through the information sheets, that the researcher could direct them towards the relevant support as required (thankfully this was not necessary). Finally, in relation to concerns regarding the researcher, the internal University counsellor was contacted and the researcher made himself aware of how to contact him if required (again thankfully this was not necessary). There was one incident during the fieldwork, when one of the young men sadly took his own life, this greatly

affected the researcher, but the primary supervisor, who had a similar experience during her own research was able to provide support and guidance at the time.

As this was the researcher's first individually conducted piece of research within the prison setting, the researcher was inevitably extremely inexperienced in the ethical nature of this form of research. The supervisory team provided outstanding professional help, support and expertise in the application. In particular, Dr. Linda Moore, who has a wealth of prison research experience, was able to guide the way. She was crucial in the ethical application process and it is safe to say the research would not have gained the access it did without her expertise, knowledge and reputation in the area. She was also extremely motivational and supportive throughout the fieldwork and write-up process for which the researcher will be forever grateful.

After the researcher spent his first day within the prison setting, the importance of the ethical process and educating himself in the imperatives of ethical research was apparent. The prison population is correctly deemed to be a very vulnerable group as many prisoners have amongst other issues experiences of abuse, violence and substance misuse, and the core value and underlying imperative of the research was to ensure that no harm was caused to any of the participants. In this regard, it was important to recognise and adhere to the ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality and the protection of data, which are discussed below. The researcher was guided by the principle of "nonmaleficence" (Gostin et al., 2007: 115) throughout the research process.

4.4.1 Informed consent

For the interviews, only participants who had the capacity to give free and informed consent were selected. In order to ensure consent was informed, the interview participants were provided with clear and understandable information sheets, which the researcher read aloud to them prior to the interview beginning and gave them after to keep. They were free to ask questions at any time throughout this process and the interview itself. The participants were not pressured in any way to take part

in the research and could withdraw from the research at any time⁴. To confirm their informed consent all of the interview participants signed consent forms prior to interviews. As previously mentioned, the participants were made aware that advice regarding support sources within the prison and relevant contact numbers for NGO bodies operating outside the prison were available to them at any stage following the interviews, thankfully these were not required. To achieve informed consent to furthest extent possible during the participant observation element of the fieldwork the researcher ensured that all the participants were well informed as to the nature of the research. To achieve this, upon commencing the research, the researcher talked to the young men on every landing of Cedar House as a group (five landings with around 10-14 young men on each) during association time, a period of time when all of the young men on each landing were collectively together (an effective method used in previous observational research, see Cesaroni and Alvi, 2010). This

4 There was one instance where the researcher felt a staff member was trying to pressurise the young men into participating in the study. The following excerpt is taken from the researcher's field notes on the day: "Upon finishing an interview with one of the young men I was tidying up and a member of prison staff came in and asked if I was finished the interviews. I said that I had several more to do, they said "oh well I've a volunteer for you, wait here". I thought to myself that it was great that someone had expressed interest in the research to the staff. The staff member returned with a young man and then left the room. The young man came in and was instantly restless, he was looking in the cupboards and drawers for something to use for a filter for his roll-up. He eventually sat down across from me and we started talking about the information sheet and I, as I always do, began to read it to him. As I was doing this he asked, almost frustrated, "how long is this going to take?" I responded that it would last as long as he was willing to talk for and asked what was wrong, he said "I really couldn't be fucked doing this now, I was just about to go out for a smoke and all the lads are just sitting having the craic in the library there". I responded that he was under absolutely no obligation to do the interview and that I would prefer if he was doing something he was enjoying than doing this and suggested doing it with him another time if he would like. He agreed to this and left. I packed up for the second time and began to walk out of the education block, the same staff member said "I have another volunteer for you", who was standing beside them. I responded saying that I was finished for the day and not to worry about it, however the young man insisted he was okay to do it now. We returned to the classroom to do the interview, he seemed reluctant to answer the questions in any detail and answered "no comment" to some of the questions (this was the shortest of the interviews I conducted and the only time a participant answered a question with "no comment"). Once we finished the interview I thanked him, I felt extremely frustrated. From this point onwards I have decided to only use the young men who volunteer themselves personally to me" (July).

process ensured that all of the young men obtained a detailed understanding of what the research entailed as the information was explained to a small group. It also provided the young men with a more comfortable atmosphere and a longer period of time to ask questions regarding the research, which they did in great detail⁵. This approach also reduced the impact on the overall prison regime. The alternatives would have meant gathering a larger group of prisoners together or a member of staff bringing the researcher around and introducing him to each individual prisoner to explain the research.

At this point the researcher explained the nature and purpose of research in detail and advised the prisoners that they could volunteer for the interviews by speaking to the researcher or making a member of staff aware that they would like to participate. The researcher explained the nature of the implied consent imperative and that he was, at that point, asking for their consent in regards to the participant observation side of the research and would ask again at the beginning of other association, educational or vocational sessions that the researcher would be sitting in on. He explained that if they did not want to participate they could inform the researcher or another member of staff and that no information which relates to them will be used. In relation to the researcher sitting in on the vocational training and educational classes, the researcher advised that if one or more prisoners objected to his presence he would remove himself from the room⁶. Again no issues regarding this were mentioned and most of the young men welcomed the researcher, and the research, and were more than keen to be involved.

Managing the expectations of the participants was also a priority to the researcher. The participants were informed at this point and throughout the fieldwork period of the professional limitations of the researcher and professional boundaries between the researcher and authorised advice providers. The researcher reiterated that he would not be able to contact anyone outside prison on behalf of the prisoners. The researcher also made all the young men aware that he was always willing to

⁵At this time, it is relevant to thank the internal NIPS supervisor who organised these meetings and introduced the researcher to the young men and the relevant staff within the prison.

⁶ As the researcher had secured access to conduct fieldwork in the prison for a period of nine months he was confident that in the unlikely event he had to remove himself from one of the sessions he could do so without it dramatically affecting the research.

answer any questions regarding the research and to approach him at any time in relation to this⁷. At this point the researcher handed out smaller A5 flyer versions of the information sheets to each of the young men he had talked to and left a pile of them on a table in each of the association rooms. The researcher also put up information posters in each of the association rooms in Cedar House as well as in other communal areas in the house and the prison (such as the gym, educational classes and notice boards, the Tuck Shack, Cabin etc.). Again the researcher made it clear that if the participants did not understand the information or could not read the information sheets to approach him at any time or ask the staff and the researcher would explain the research in greater detail on request from the prisoners. The researcher did not commence the observational side of the research for 48 hours after these meetings to allow the prisoners to decide whether or not they would like to participate in the research.

Thus, the researcher sought to ensure consent was informed to the best of his ability. The researcher explained the research in detail to the young men on each of the landings in Cedar House, answering any questions at this time and emphasising that the researcher would always make himself available at any time after this to answer later questions or explain the research in more detail to individual prisoners. From this point the young men knew that if they did not want to participate, or they did not consent to the research, they could declare this to a member of staff or to the researcher. This information was also declared on the information sheet and flyers. ‘Implied informed consent’ in this regard, is in line with the British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice (2017: 5), where it states that verbal consent will be sought not as a one-off event but a “process subject to renegotiation over time”. The researcher regularly reminded the participants that he was conducting independent research in the association, educational and vocational sessions. The researcher is confident that all of the young men who were part of both the interview and/or participant observation process were adequately informed of the research and consented to being part of it.

⁷ It was evident that the young men felt comfortable approaching the researcher to talk about the research as he was quizzed on it, his personal views on imprisonment and particular crimes and what he would be doing with the findings on a number of occasions.

During the participant observation the focus of the research was always on the young men, however to gain a fuller picture of the challenges faced by young men and the people who work with them, interactions with staff members and some staff views and opinions were also included. In the same nature as with the prisoners, the researcher explained to several staff members, on the same day, the nature of the research being conducted alongside answering any questions and also passing out information sheets regarding the research. At this point the researcher made clear that he would be conducting interviews with some staff members (those who participated in the study were also provided with the relevant information and signed consent forms). Together with informed consent, confidentiality and the protection of data were of the utmost importance, these are discussed next.

4.4.2 Confidentiality

Alongside informed consent the confidentiality of the participants was a priority. To achieve this, the researcher provided and read information regarding confidentiality and anonymity to participants prior to the research being conducted. In doing so, reminding participants that confidentiality would not apply where there was information about illegal activity, disclosure of any breaches of prison security or any information relating to intent to cause self-harm or harm to others. The researcher ensured that in these situations he would contact the appropriate personnel, thankfully this was not necessary. The researcher conducted all the interviews in private areas not within earshot of prisoners or members of staff. These were classrooms, association rooms and offices. Observation was conducted in communal areas, classrooms and workshop environments, where participants were in large groups, to minimise the invasion of privacy.

The researcher discussed with participants the extent to which it would be possible to ensure their anonymity in the thesis and potential further publications i.e. the use of identifying details such as nature of offence, length of sentence, nature of support provided to them within the prison and so on. This was discussed to ensure that research participants could express informed consent to the use of information collected through the research (it was not the purpose of the research to uncover any information relating to crimes committed prior to imprisonment and questions were not asked specifically relating to this). Anonymity was ensured, the researcher explained to all participants that they would be referred to under pseudonyms. The

researcher also ensured no information provided was visible or accessible to other participants and did not disclose any details of conversation with other participants. All participants were informed about the precautions taken to ensure data protection and storage of relevant material which are outlined below.

4.4.3 Data protection

To protect data, the researcher acknowledged the risks concerned with data protection and took the relevant precautions in correlation with the Ulster University Data Protection Policy (2015) regarding the ethical protection of data. The researcher transcribed all the interviews and typed up all the field notes, maintaining the security of the information. The researcher ensured that all electronic data collected during the research was stored on his personal Ulster University computer in which a unique user name and secure password is required. Electronic information collected prior to transfer to a secure computer was protected via encryption and password protection. Printed or written data was securely locked in a filing cabinet on the Ulster University campus. Once the ethical applications were approved the researcher began the fieldwork process as outlined in the following section.

4.5 Fieldwork Process

4.5.1 Participant inclusion

Once the ethical process was successfully navigated the fieldwork process was able to commence. This section outlines the process: beginning with considerations as to which prisoners would be eligible for inclusion in the study; progressing on to the recruitment of participants and how the methods were put into practice; before reflecting back on the process and the researcher's experience in Hydebank. Through initial discourse with the NIPS it was thought that those young men (aged 18-24) held in Cedar House would be most suitable for the research. The majority of these young men were on the 'Enhanced Regime', which meant they have passed drug tests and displayed positive attitude, behaviour and willingness to participate in programs to address offending behaviour. This was rewarded with various improved recreational facilities and an increasingly more relaxed regime as they progress through the various stages of enhancement.

The early stages of the research in Hydebank were conducted with the young men in Cedar House. However, several factors resulted in the research taking a more holistic approach in regards to participants: firstly, the nature of the fluid enhancement regime in Hydebank meant the young men frequently moved landings and subsequently houses; secondly, the relatively low numbers of the young men in Hydebank at the time the fieldwork was being conducted. Finally, the ‘struggling⁸’ young men who the researcher spent a lot of time with on C1 were reintegrated back into the general population after a month or so of the research commencing. Therefore, although none of the participant observation took place in Beech House the participants selected for inclusion in the research were all the young men held in Hydebank throughout the fieldwork period, unless they expressed a desire not to participate. Grounds for exclusion were any perceived concerns about the young men’s ability to consent or concerns regarding the impact of participating on them.

In regards to the observational side of the research, staff members’ interactions with young people informed the research, but the primary focus was always on the experiences of the young men. To attain a complete picture of the experiences of young men in Hydebank it was deemed useful to involve prison staff in the interview process. The research includes three prison officer interviews and three support staff interviews. Twenty-six interviews with young men were conducted over the nine-month period, as mentioned before there were around 80-100 young men being held within Hydebank during the fieldwork period so this was a significant amount of interviews given the relatively small number of young men in the prison. These interviews ranged in length with the shortest lasting 15 minutes and the longest lasting 70 minutes. The average time for the interviews was 45 minutes. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 24 and for the most part had all spent time in both Beech and Cedar House. The researcher did not ask their religious background at any stage in the process, but religion was one of the topics of discussion during the interviews and it was evident there was a mixture of Catholic, Protestant and other religions. All of the young men were of white ethnic descent. For three of the prisoners this was their first time in prison and for the others this was their second or more, two of the young men had been in Hydebank five times or more. In terms of sentences, 15 of the interview participants had been sentenced

8 Young men who were finding it hard to mix with the rest of the young men or struggling within the prison environment for a variety of reasons not related to their offences.

to one year or more, and of these 15, six had been sentenced to more than five years. Some of the young men were on remand and some were awaiting appeal decisions. The next sub-section will discuss in greater detail the recruitment of these participants and how the research methods were put into practice.

4.5.2 Recruitment and research in practice

As previously mentioned (see section 4.4), to ensure informed consent to furthest extent possible, the researcher ensured that all the participants held in Hydebank were well informed as to the nature of the research. On the day the researcher explained the research in detail to the young men landing by landing, he also advised prisoners that they could voluntarily participate in the research. All the young men were very engaged with the research and all felt it would be beneficial for them to voice their needs and experiences of imprisonment. Many felt that the research was necessary in terms of highlighting to a wider audience the needs and concerns of young men in prison. On the same day that the researcher spoke to the young men landing by landing, with permission from Hydebank the researcher circulated information sheets to the young men on each landing and also put up numerous informative posters throughout the institution. The use of posters for recruitment in prison research has been successful in previous studies (see Liebling et al., 2015; Bennett, 2015) and was useful in spreading the word about the research. However, the interactions with the young men during the participant observation side of the study, and the familiarity which this produced, provided the main source of recruitment of participants for the interviews.

The participant observation aspect of the research took place in: vocational training classes, educational classes, recreational activities and association periods. In the vocational training classes – such as, CCP (industrial cleaning), ‘cheffing’ (cooking), barbering, plumbing, joinery and recycling – the researcher actively partook in the training, getting involved in a range of activities from mopping floors to making pavlova. In the educational classes, such as maths, English, ICT and Arts and Crafts; and recreational activities, such as playing football and weightlifting in the gym, the researcher undertook a similar role, fully immersing himself in the environment, partaking in the various classes and activities. Finally, during association periods, the researcher played pool and snooker with the young men,

spent time watching TV and listening to music with them and attended some external campus activities, such as visiting the Lyric Theatre.

To attain the most information possible from the interviewees, the researcher waited for several weeks before commencing the interviews and even at this stage conducted very few. Only those who he had got to know reasonably well and who were soon to be released were interviewed at the early stages of the fieldwork period. The purpose of this was to build rapport and relationships with the young men during the participant observation, getting to know more about them, their life and experiences of prison and identifying some of the most pressing needs and experiences to talk about during the interviews. Over the nine-month period 25 of the 26 young interviewees volunteered themselves directly to the researcher. The other interviewee was asked by a staff member to take part, this interview was significantly shorter than all of the others and the young man was the only one to say “no comment” during the interview process (see footnote 5 for more information).

During the participant observation, the focus of the research was always on the young men. However, to gain a fuller picture of the challenges faced by young men and the people who work with them, interactions with staff members and some staff perspectives were also included. In terms of the six staff interviews, they, like the young men, volunteered themselves. The BMC and Start 360⁹ staff in particular were extremely supportive throughout the fieldwork allowing the researcher to become involved in their classes and introducing him, countless times, to new prisoners. They were encouraged by the research and were keen to informally share experiences and views about imprisonment and the regime within Hydebank.

During the fieldwork the researcher did not ask what the young men were in Hydebank for, believing that they had been given the punishment decided for them by the courts. Furthermore, every individual possesses the ability to address the issues they have and should not be judged by mistakes made in the past. Although the researcher never asked, some of the young men disclosed their crimes

⁹ Start 360: is a support service which operates across Northern Ireland providing a range of services to people who are often marginalised from communities or disengaged from mainstream services in the areas of employability, health and justice. Start 360 has partnered with Hydebank to provide a range of services to prisoners, such as addressing substance abuse issues, parental support and coping with prison life.

unprompted. Again the researcher adopted a non-judgemental approach. A reflection on the fieldwork process follows.

4.5.3 Fieldwork Reflection

In a reflexive ethnographic account, it is relevant to consider the position of the researcher in relation to the participants. When the fieldwork began (March, 2016) the researcher was 26, just two years older than some of the young men in Hydebank. He was born and raised in Belfast in an area around four miles from the City Hall (regarded as the centre of the city) and one mile from Hydebank. As an adolescent the researcher associated with individuals who had spent time in Hydebank (two of whom took their own lives and some are now in other prison institutions in NI) and at present knows some of the relatives of those who are imprisoned in Hydebank¹⁰. He experienced interactions with police as an adolescent. As the researcher matured he wanted to become more involved in working with young people in the community and began volunteering as a local youth worker, project worker with NIACRO and football coach for a local youth team (the researcher is still involved with both NIACRO and the youth football team). The reason to refer to these characteristics is not to try to appear as some form of ‘insider’ to the prison setting, but to highlight personal and professional experience working with young and vulnerable individuals from a range of backgrounds. These experiences have provided an insight into factors which can lead to criminality, and gave the researcher the ability to talk to and build a rapport with people from a variety of backgrounds which he believes significantly enhanced the research findings. It is through these personal life and professional experiences that the researcher’s interest in masculinities and their impact on behaviour associated with criminality emerged.

10 On the first week the researcher was in the prison, one of the young men he had been interacting with on a regular basis, stated that the researcher knew a relative of the young man extremely well (which the researcher was aware of, but had not mentioned). Upon hearing this the young men in close proximity started joking that the researcher should meet the young man’s relative and bring them in a few parcels. At another stage in the research another young man realised that the researcher had been friends with the young man’s brother as a youth (which again the researcher was aware of, but again had not mentioned), the young man said “you used to stay over in my house”.

Bearing these things in mind the researcher consciously determined the identity he wanted to present to the young men in Hydebank prior to entering the institution. The researcher sought to be viewed primarily as a researcher, viewed by the young men strictly in a professional capacity which he was able to maintain throughout the research. The researcher did not reveal any elements of his past or any of the associates' names he knew who had spent time in, or were in, prison institutions in NI. As previously mentioned, the researcher also did not ask any of the young men why they were in Hydebank or anything about any of the crimes they had committed in the past. This was because the researcher believed it was irrelevant, firstly to the study, in the sense that the researcher was aiming to understand their experiences of prison and secondly, because of the belief that the act was in the past, and therefore does not define the individual in the present.

The second identity the researcher maintained throughout the research was assigned to him by the young men and that was that of a 'young man'. In reflection, this was probably inevitable considering the similarities in age, but it was also contributed to by similar interests in popular culture and sport¹¹, in particular football. Football was a great common ground between the researcher and the young men, the researcher was fortunate to participate with them on a number of occasions. The young men talked about desires to play an 11 a side match on the grass pitch, as they were normally restricted to a smaller artificial pitch for 10 people or so, but they had no-one to play against. The researcher was able to organise (alongside the very co-operative and supportive gym staff) a series of three games with the local team he plays for. The matches were played on Sundays and both teams had lunch, provided by the prison, together after the matches. The games were competitive, but in good nature, and were the talk of the prison in the build-up and aftermath of the game each time. It was an extremely positive experience for everyone involved.

To maintain his position primarily as a researcher, the researcher always carried a notepad and wore a shirt and jeans within the setting to differentiate himself from the young men, who for the most part wore more comfortable clothing such as

11 The researcher and young men had similar interests in terms of music, TV series and movies and also sports related activity such as the gym, boxing, UFC, snooker etc.

tracksuits¹². This is not to say that the researcher's identity was not tested: in the earlier stages of the research, the researcher was quizzed on his research, why he was there and most commonly, if he would engage in sexual intercourse with specified women. His response was that he had a fiancée and did not look at other women in this way, which was both true and an effective response. Technological advances in the prison meant that the researcher was given a small I.D. card which, alongside his finger prints, gave him access to every part of the prison apart from the landings and cells. The young men also carried these cards, with relevant access restrictions. This card allowed the researcher to access the majority of the prison without being escorted and without having to carry keys, which has posed somewhat of a dilemma in other prison studies (see Crewe, 2009). On many occasions the researcher entered the prison and walked straight over and into a classroom without interacting with any prison staff. Reflecting back on the fieldwork period, there are a number of research realities and limitations, these are identified in the following section.

4.6 Research Realities

As previously mentioned, there are some potential limitations to the research. Due to the study's concentration on one institution, which holds only young men and is the only young male orientated institution within a relatively small country, the generalisation of the research is limited. However, it does provide an in-depth account of how masculinities can shape young men's experiences of prison. Although all of the findings cannot be said to be generalizable to other institutions, much of the time prisoners face similar problems across a range of institutions and comparisons can be made to research which already exists particularly in relation to violence (see Toch, 1998; Scraton et al., 1991), health problems (see Smith, 2000; De Viggiani, 2006) and substance abuse issues (see Cope, 2003; Crewe, 2009).

Due to the nature of the relationship built up over a relatively long period, the researcher was concerned that the young men may have provided him with the

¹² This did not stop the young men and the staff confusing the researcher with an inmate on a number of occasions. He was regularly asked by the young men what he was in for and on one occasion a staff member tried to search the researcher while he walked out of the education building, much to the delight of the young men, who found it hilarious.

answers they thought he may want to hear. Furthermore, because the researcher was a young man himself the participants may have emphasised or exaggerated their responses to the question to project what they deemed to be a socially accepted image of a young man. To minimise these issues, the researcher did not mention the theoretical background of the research throughout the fieldwork period. In addition, the questions asked during the observations and interviews were always open-ended and never led the participants towards any form of response.

Moreover, in relation to the study of young men through the lens of critical masculinities studies, as previously mentioned the chosen methodology intended to gain holistic insight into the prison experience. However, at times during the interviews – the element of the research where the researcher hoped the participants would be open and honest regarding experiences – the young men appeared reluctant to talk about specific issues, particularly in relation to children and contact with children. The intention of the interviews was to penetrate these barriers, but this was not always possible and it is not known if this was due to the researcher's identity or just reluctance by some young men to open up about these issues. Throughout the fieldwork period the researcher analysed the data before final analysis at the end, this process is discussed in the next section.

4.7 Data Analysis

Upon finishing the fieldwork phase of the study the data was analysed in a systematic fashion. The research took a grounded theoretical approach where the researcher sought the “discovery of theory from data” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 1), entering the prison with no proposed hypothesis. Instead, the research adopted an approach that was utilised effectively in Abrams et al.'s (2008) prison research. In this approach, the researcher entered the field aiming to seek an understanding of prisoners' experiences and attitudes towards prison life, but gained this understanding from an inductive standpoint. In this way, the inter-personal interactions and subjective perspectives of the young men, alongside the general regime of prison life, guided the findings, as opposed to having a pre-determined hypothesis. Following this, the key findings and theory were drawn from the analysis of the primary data. This process took part over three phases, which are discussed below.

The first phase of analysis, “familiarisation” of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87), was conducted during the fieldwork period. This involved the researcher familiarising himself with the data and was achieved through the transcription of interviews and the typing up of field notes. All the interviews were recorded using an audio recorder to ensure accuracy and all 32 interviews were transcribed by the researcher in their entirety using the “clean verbatim” transcription style, which is a verbatim transcription without the inclusion of non-verbal expressions (Guest et al., 2013: 287). The second phase, utilised Charmaz’s (2006: 50) approach of “line-by-line” coding, which involves labelling each line of text (from field notes and initial interviews) with what the researcher felt each line was referring to, at times there was more than one label for each sentence. As each sentence was assigned a meaning, similar and repeat labels began to emerge allowing the researcher to view the data anew each time it was read over. This engagement with the emergence of significant labels enabled a perception of the data that was not possible in the first stage of analysis. The third phase, again outlined by Charmaz (2014: 138), was “focused coding” when the significant codes, those which repeatedly emerged from the data, became master codes. These master codes were then used to analyse and conceptualise larger amounts of data and subsequently largely contributed to the study’s significant findings, such as young men’s gendered experiences of time, drug use, vulnerability and violence. Nvivo 11 software was used to support the management, coding and categorisation of data.

The use of a grounded theoretical approach in line with the methodological approach utilised by Abrams et al. (2008) had the desired effect the researcher sought. Although, the researcher was aware of the many needs and experiences of prisoners through his review of literature, some really interesting findings emerged that the researcher had not anticipated, in particular young men’s gendered experiences of time in prison. This may appear to be an obvious significance given the fact that time is the structural dimension for imprisonment. However, the contribution of time to power dynamics and hierarchical structuring of the young men was something that the researcher had not read about or considered prior to entering the prison (also see Cope, 2003; Sloan, 2016). These dynamics alongside the other key findings will be discussed in the following chapters. This chapter will now provide a concluding overview of what has been discussed, the key points and the importance of these to this thesis.

4.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the influence of profeminist literature on the researcher and the importance of critical analysis when researching masculinities. It has also provided an overview of the research process. Beginning with the identification and justification of the ethnographic methodology of the research including the theoretical background of ethnography and the research methods utilised. In correlation, this chapter has also provided the relevant ethical considerations for conducting prison research via this approach and the process involved in attaining ethical approval from both Ulster University and the NIPS. This chapter has also provided an insight into the research process, considering the inclusion and recruitment of participants, a reflection on the process and the researcher's experiences in Hydebank and also some of the potential realities of the research. Finally, this chapter incorporates discussion on the data analysis process, providing an insight to the grounded approach to the research allowing the experiences and interactions within the prison to guide the findings. The findings will be discussed throughout the next four chapters and will be discussed according to the following themes: setting the constitution of masculinities found in Hydebank within the wider NI context; an examination of how varying power relationships which affect young men in prison shape expressions of masculinity in Hydebank; exploring how young men's gendered notions of time in Hydebank shape their prison experience; and finally, the sources of vulnerability which affect young men in Hydebank.

5 Research Findings: Setting the constitution of masculinities found in Hydebank within the wider NI context

5.1 Introduction

Drawing from primary findings gathered within Hydebank, this chapter explores how community-based issues shape expressions of masculinity in Hydebank. Studies conducted by Irwin and Cressey (1962) and Jacobs (1977) support the argument that prison is “not a closed culture” (Clemmer, 1958: xv) and that prison cultures stem from, and reflect, cultures from wider society. Indeed, Irwin and Cressey (1962) found that prisoners ‘imported’ characteristics and behaviours from their external communities and adapted them to the prison setting. In a similar vein, Jacobs (1977) found a divided prisoner society, identifying multiple ethnically-defined gangs which had been ‘imported’ into the prison setting.

In relation to the studies conducted by Irwin and Cressey (1962) and Jacobs (1977), this thesis recognises that cultural factors from wider society can permeate the prison walls. However, it is important to move beyond the “stale impasse” (Crewe, 2009: 8) of the ‘importation’ and ‘indigenous’ debate, and recognise that cultures and masculinities found within prison are shaped both by the wider society and the prison environment. Considering these issues, this chapter highlights how aspects of NI society pervade the prison walls and contribute to expressions of masculinity within Hydebank, while Chapter 6 examines in more detail the prison-based gendered power relationships which affect young men in prison and shape expressions of masculinity in Hydebank.

Within the wider NI context, research suggests that young men from working-class communities conform to expressions of masculinity which are reinforced by the behaviours of older men within their communities. These masculinities are characterised by expectations to refute any form of behaviour which could be associated with femininity, the policing of their own and others’ behaviour and toughness (Harland, 2011; Harland et al., 2005). Although, there has been a dearth of research on young men and masculinities within NI (Ashe and Harland, 2014; Harland and McCready, 2014), the research that exists suggests that young working-class men are experiencing a sense of “alienation, perceived normality of violence, unwelcome interactions with paramilitary members and restrictive notions of

masculinity” (Harland and McCready, 2014: 1). Ashe and Harland (2014) found that young working-class men’s expressions of masculinity in NI are being constructed in some of the most “hostile and dangerous environments” (Ashe and Harland, 2014: 755) imaginable; and young men from lower socio-economic backgrounds are also experiencing high levels of “poverty, educational underachievement, and social marginalisation” (Ashe and Harland, 2014: 756). Furthermore, they found that these young men aspire to role models which emphasise violent expressions of masculinity.

NI is a transitional society progressing away from an extensive period of ethno-nationalist conflict. However, elements of the conflict remain and the suggestion that NI is a peaceful society neglects persistent high levels of political violence and paramilitary activity within many areas (Gormley-Heenan and Monaghan, 2012; Nolan, 2014). Statistics highlight that young men from lower socio-economic backgrounds are over-represented in all areas of the CJS, suicides, school expulsions and academic underachievement (Harland and McCready, 2014). Furthermore, the prison system, like many institutions throughout NI, has been shaped by the conflict. As stated by Moore and Scraton (2014: 73), “at all levels – management, operation and regimes – the prisons were shaped by sectarianism”. There is a continued lack of diversity amongst the staff demographic within the NIPS. Across all of the prison institutions within NI the vast majority of staff are White, male and Protestant, for example the CJINI (2012) report identified that 80 percent of Maghaberry’s prison grade staff were Protestant (compared to 48 percent of the wider NI population) (Martynowicz, 2016). To compound matters further a large majority of prisoners within NI are Catholics, as identified in Chapter 1, the CJINI (2016b) inspection in Hydebank identified that 62 percent of the young men from the Roman Catholic religion (compared to 44 percent of the working age NI population [Gordon, 2018]).

Considering the issues discussed thus far, and based upon primary findings collected through participant observation and interviews in Hydebank, this chapter examines how key aspects of NI community shape expressions of masculinity in Hydebank. It is broken into five sections, each examining a key community-based issue that shapes masculinities in Hydebank. The first section discusses young men’s feelings of powerlessness and social marginalisation within NI. The second

focuses on the emotional fortitude of young men in Hydebank, exploring their disciplined control and, at times, dismissal of emotions. The third explores the normalisation of violence for young men in Hydebank. The fourth examines the common and conflicting interactions young men have with paramilitary organisations within NI. The final section focuses on the unwritten rules which govern young men's lives inside and outside prison. All quotes attributed to young men, support staff and prison staff throughout this, and the following chapters, are from the primary research conducted in Hydebank.

5.2 Young men's experiences of feelings of powerlessness and social marginalisation

As has been well documented through subcultural studies of young men, not only within NI but wider afield, there was been a consistent portrayal of young people – and in particular young men – as a threat to society. Throughout the 1950s/60s there was a constant presentation of young men as 'deviant' in the media, culminating in "moral panics" surrounding gangs of young men such as the "Mods and Rockers" (Cohen, 1972: 3). This has continued in contemporary times through media discourse on "Hoodies" (Marsh and Melville, 2011: 1) and "ASBOs" (Squires, 2008: 1). These portrayals present groups of young men as violent, aggressive and anti-social (Muncie, 2015). Cohen (1972) suggests that moral panic may arise when society feels its values and principles are under threat from a particular group, in this regard, young men. He argues that the media's sensationalist coverage of young men leads to negative stereotyping (Cohen, 1972). This can result in the young people adopting a negative label and can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, where the young person's identity becomes characterised by the label attached to them, which in turn results in future deviant behaviour (Gordon et al., 2015).

As a result, there is a failure to examine the root cause of behaviour, thus obscuring insights into the perceived powerlessness of the young men (Muncie, 2015). Examining young people's marginalisation, Horgan (2011) found that NI had more than double the proportion of children living in poverty (21 percent) compared to British counterparts (9 percent). She found that NI communities were still largely segregated in the aftermath of the conflict and communities possess high levels of disability and chronic physical and mental ill-health (Horgan, 2011). These issues

were exacerbated by the large amounts of young people with undefined social status who were not in education, training or employment (Horgan et al., 2014). Lloyd (2009) had similar findings, identifying that young men in NI expressed concerns regarding marginalisation and had a lack of optimism for the future (Lloyd, 2009). The social marginalisation and absence of opportunities for young working-class men within NI was largely recognised by the young men in Hydebank, as is evident in Brendy's and Zack's interviews:

[What are the main issues facing young men in Hydebank?] The return rate, they're threw out with nothing really set up for them, go out there with no money and no jobs and they just get straight back into trying to steal what they can... they're just threw out and come back in and there's never any interaction with any of them... there is some of them that just want to stay out, but just can't live out there you know. No job for them, no money in their pocket, so they go put money in their pocket the wrong way... there's just no opportunities there... it's just a fucking turning wheel you're working with, it's just in and out, in and out, some of them boys I've seen been in five, six times in the time I've been in once. For just petty stuff, like going stealing meat out of the butchers or stupid stuff like that, just trying to get a couple of quid you know. (Brendy)

[What are the main issues facing young men in Hydebank?] There's nothing to get out to know what I mean, once they leave here they have nothing. They are going to a hostel, they've no home, they've no money, they've no qualifications to get a job, they have nothing to fall back on. So they end up just re-offending because they have nothing else to do and they come back in. It's sad, some people prefer it in here cause it's stability, it's a stable environment, know what I mean. You get up, you go to work, get your lunch, you get your dinner, everything is done for you, you have something to do. (Zack)

Feelings of wider social marginalisation were common amongst the young men, many spoke of dismal job prospects, being exiled from communities and substance addictions. As Zack mentions there was a belief among some of the young men that Hydebank was the best place for them to be, "some people prefer it in here" (Zack). Supporting Zack's claim, a young man called Matty during the observational period, said:

[What do you think about Hydebank?] I actually like Hydebank, like when the judge says Hydebank for six months I don't mind, I like coming here. This will be my last time here though *[Why?]* I'll be going to Maghaberry next. (Matty)

When Matty was asked what he thought of Hydebank, he shrugged his shoulders and smiled. He was being brutally honest. Life in the community for a lot of the young men meant unemployment, financial distress, homelessness, threat from paramilitary organisations and substance abuse concerns. Although, their time in Hydebank – as evidenced throughout this thesis – was deeply troubling, it provided a form of stability, food and a place to sleep at night. Other young men spoke of the escape Hydebank provided them:

For me at the very, very start, it sort of was strange, because it was – for me personally – it was an escape sort of... outside I wasn't happy and stuff anyway, so it was strange yeah being locked up, but it never really processed in my mind that I was in jail. (Craig)

Examining such feelings of social marginalisation through the lens of masculinities, Harland (1997; 2000) found that young men from working-class backgrounds in NI possessed narrow and contradictory notions of what it meant to be a man, believing that masculinity was characterised by power, strength, independence and intelligence, while in reality their lives deeply contrasted with this. Harland (1997; 2000) found that young working-class men possessed: feelings of powerlessness; fear from regular threat of violence; neglect of physical and mental health concerns; a need for support, but reluctance to ask for it; and experiences of being labelled 'stupid' in school. These feelings of wanting power, but being powerless, were also prevalent amongst young men in Hydebank:

Probation... I've been in the system since I was five and a half, you know through care and shit like that. I can't trust any of them, they are all snakes in the grass. Anyone who works for the system I don't like... I'm not going to a hostel with a load of fucking roots¹³ in it, and old people and all... I don't feel comfortable around them and so that point was brought across... when I got out they took me to the Housing Executive, they couldn't get me a house so they made up a load of shit and recalled me... they want me to do it all [licence in prison], they are just wankers because I won't give in completely. I'll co-operate to an extent, and they are saying you know more or less stick your hand in the fire... if they are pushing it too far in then I'm going to say no. I'm my own man. (Phillip)

¹³ 'Roots' were young men who were suspected, by the young men, to be in Hydebank for sexual offences.

Within Hydebank young men strived for feelings of power and dominance (which are attainable to a certain extent over other young men as discussed in Chapter 6), however as documented in Chapter 4 the state ultimately holds the overall power. These feelings of hunger for autonomy, but ultimate powerlessness, are apparent in Phillip's interview. He says he is "his own man", but in reality he has lost his liberty and has very limited options on release. Yet he is striving to maintain his autonomy in a situation where he has very little.

In the wider NI context, young men from working-class communities express feelings of marginalisation (Harland, 1997; 2000). In Harland and McCready's (2014) study not one of the young men who participated throughout the duration of the five-year study could envisage their position of marginalisation changing in the future and not one felt as if they shared a role in the peace process. The young men felt disconnected from local initiatives and were "regularly perceived as 'problems' as opposed to resources, by adults in their communities" (Harland and McCready, 2014: 12). It is evident that these strong feelings of marginalisation, vulnerability and undervalue were also experienced by the young men in Hydebank.

The media portrayal of young working-class men as part of a deviant subculture, lacking traditional societal morals and values, reinforces the shared public perception that young men have become a 'social problem' (Harland, 2001). The young men within Hydebank often spoke about the wider social issues they faced and societal perceptions of young men, as Gerard describes:

Society needs to wake up and understand you can't call someone a criminal, send them for rehabilitation and then refuse to accept them back into the community, because it just creates a vicious circle. Whenever society wake ups and realises that, right this is a problem, we need to deal with it hands on. We need to not go into this with a negative view, then it starts to be successful. Like you will see things in the media like, you know prisoners get it easy, and you know they are getting set up with jobs whenever they get out, and you know my son can't get a job and he has never been in jail. But right look at it this way, in a broader sense of society, society has a problem with unemployment, yes... somebody going out and getting a job, yes that maybe unfair on the person who has a kid and can't get a job, but that is preventing a crime. People need to stop muddying the water and be realistic, someone is not going to be a criminal if they have a job sitting there waiting for them, they are still a human, they are still the exact same as that person's son who doesn't have a job... they maybe just need a foot on the ladder to straighten things

out. Because over time what that will create is a society that doesn't have a problem with crime, and that will create a more productive society that won't have a problem with unemployment, but it is just people that are very much in the short-term right now and can't think about the bigger picture.

Gerard articulates his argument very well, describing the “vicious circle” many young men face upon returning to the community and society's focus on the “short term”. The negative stereotyping of young people and wider public disdain for them has increased through the introduction of social media (Rodwell, 2018). Within the NI context social media accounts, on various platforms, are increasingly being utilised as a means of publically declaring communal disregard for young men's behaviour. As explained by Kyle:

Aye I had stuff put over Facebook, “drug dealer” blah, blah, blah, my name someone else's name, someone else's name, someone else's name. Four of them. “Such and such drug dealing in the community” blah, blah, blah, “the community [paramilitaries] will be dealing with it” and broadcasting it all over Facebook.

Other examples can be seen on community pages, for example the ‘Colin Area Residents' Collective’ (2017a) Facebook page post on 22nd June lists 20 names of individuals who are deemed to be “major players in the North Belfast drug trade”. Another post on the wall proudly claims that a story they “first published” made it on to the front page of The Irish News. The front page of the newspaper shows a woman holding and threatening an anonymous adolescent boy by the scruff of the neck up against a hedge in North Belfast. Examining the ‘Colin Area Resident's Collective’ (2017b) Facebook page, in the original post and corresponding photograph, the boy is not anonymised, but actually named. Some of the comments regarding the child on the page show distinct abhorrence¹⁴:

- “The Wee Cunt Need his hands cut off”;
- “hes only a wee cunt thats wat he is,, deserves to be shamed”;
- “1 [bullet] in the head for the wee rat”;
- “She should have choked the wee Cunt to death no big loss”.

14 Original grammar used for all quotations from the page.

These incidents, alongside other issues facing large numbers of young men within NI, such as unemployment, over-representation in the CJS and substance abuse, contribute to the reinforcement of negative stereotypes of young men and the furtherance of feelings of social marginalisation within Hydebank. Building on these issues the following section focuses on the emotional fortitude and dismissal of emotion by young men in Hydebank.

5.3 Emotional fortitude and the dismissal of emotions

Masculinities research, as highlighted in previous chapters, largely supports the belief that from a young age, boys are socialised into a particular set of expectations (Kaufman, 2001). These expectations largely centre on dominant characteristics associated with normative masculinity, such as the rejection of behaviour which could be associated with femininity and the prioritisation of traits such as independence, power, control and aggression (Crooks et al., 2007). Through socialisation certain sayings cement this behaviour as boys progress into adulthood, such as “man-up” or “boys don’t cry” (Kang, 2013: 467). The Centre for the Study of Young Men’s research over the last 15 years has had consistent findings in relation to young working-class men in NI, that they are reluctant to seek any form of emotional support within the community (Harland, 2000; 2001; 2011; Harland and McCready, 2010; 2012; Lloyd, 2009). Harland and McCready (2014) found that expressions of masculinity for young men within NI were characterised by a strong sense of stoicism. They found that young men displayed expressions of masculinity that were characterised by acting tough, being strong and powerful and that showing feelings is viewed as a sign of weakness (Harland and McCready, 2014). The primary research conducted for the current study found that stoicism – best understood in terms of its three primary principles: lack of emotional involvement, lack of emotional expression and strict emotional control (Wagstaff and Rowledge, 1995) – was conspicuous amongst young men in Hydebank. This is confirmed in an interview with one of the prison staff members:

The support is there, but a lot of them don’t take up on it because it is a sign of weakness and... they don’t see what they do as a problem. They just see it as that is what a young person does... they don’t see that it is changing their personality and giving them problems with anger. They can’t, or they don’t want, to be seen to be taking help, some of them see that as a sign of weakness. (Prison Officer A)

Prison Officer A clearly identifies that for some of the young men in Hydebank seeking support is perceived as a sign of “weakness”. These young men want to portray themselves as tough and stoical, providing the appearance that they are unaffected by the rigours of imprisonment. Prison Officer A also identifies the impact of not utilising the support available and how this can contribute to violent and damaging behaviour. Theorists such as Seaton (2007) support this, arguing that adopting these specified behavioural expectations can be damaging for young men as “rage and aggression, through forms of resistance, mask real psychological distress. Boys’ experiences of psychological pain, when it cannot be articulated, may spur further harm as they inflict similar hurt on others” (Seaton, 2007: 212). These issues are explored in greater detail in Chapter 8.

The issue referred to by Prison Officer A, that using support services is viewed as a “weakness”, is commonly reported on in other prison-based research. Studies highlight how certain characteristics of masculinities, such as independence, heterosexuality and self-sufficiency, become threatened within the prison setting (Sykes, 1958; Jones, 2007; Crewe, 2009). Because of this threat to identity some researchers suggest that it becomes imperative to display no signs of vulnerability or weakness within the prison setting. As a result, male prisoners may be reluctant to speak to the Listeners or talk about close bereavements to others out of fear of being perceived as weak (Jones, 2007). Similar perceptions were common in Hydebank, as is evident in Adam’s interview:

We all have problems... I’m telling you now, every cunt in here will say they haven’t cried behind that door, they have... Everyone cries in behind that door, I’m used to this place now, but see whenever I know I need a wee cry, I go in and listen to Ed Sheeran or Adele or something and have a wee cry... it helps you, there’s nothing else to do. I used to cut myself to deal with it, but now I cry... I won’t cry in front of no-one, I wouldn’t do that... it shows a weakness... what you are crying over shows a weakness and that’s one thing you can’t let anyone in here know, your weakness. You can’t let anyone know your weaknesses in here or you are fucked.

Both Prison Officer A’s and Adam’s quotes provide evidence that stoical approaches to emotions, which young working-class men are socialised into within NI community (Harland and McCready, 2014), permeate the prison walls and shape

expressions of masculinity within Hydebank. Adam in particular, highlights perceptions of weaknesses and the importance of concealing them, or “you are fucked”. Concealing weaknesses was deemed to be a survival strategy and a means of avoiding exploitation, instead presenting a socially accepted stoical expression of masculinity. Through observations and discussion with the young men during the fieldwork period, it was evident that there was a general consensus amongst them that showing signs of vulnerability and weakness could result in becoming targets for exploitation or bullying. Therefore, the need for emotional control became reinforced within the prison environment. Indeed, most of the young men reported being tested in the early stages of their sentence. This ‘masculinity test’ was a way of young men measuring the degree of vulnerability of the new prisoner. It took shape in a number of ways, but mainly through confrontation or theft of personal possessions. There was a widespread consensus that an individual’s response to the ‘masculinity test’ could define the nature of their experiences within the prison. Some quotes from the interviews highlight this:

The first time I came to Hydebank I got it tight like [bullied] for a couple of weeks... I was quiet and then I said to myself, “what are you at Markus, you wouldn’t do it on the outside, don’t do it in here” and then I just started, bang. I was fighting two, three at a time and then now everybody is just sweet with me. I got into a few fights and people left me alone. (Markus)

It usually happens within your first week, especially if you are a first timer to Hydebank... you are gonna be put in a situation, maybe even by someone on the landing who’s not considered a hard man, to be stepped upon. You know, to have someone pushed in your face, fucking see what way you are gonna react and if you do react, how... my first time it did happen, they sent this wee young fella and he was stuttering and buttering. He didn’t really know what he was saying, but I knew what was going on and my first instinct was to hurt him. (Gary)

[Have you experienced many fights in Hydebank?] Yeah, a lot at the start, when it was needed... It was people just testing the water, being cheeky to see what way I would react, you have to belt them like, you have no other option... If you don’t step up... it’s called ‘buckling’. (Brendy)

As is evident from the interviews, there was a perception from some of the young men that showing weakness could result in bullying and victimisation and the only

means of preventing this happening was appearing to be strong, aggressive and violent “you have to belt them like” (Brendy). Examining this ‘masculinity test’ theory regarding “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 125) or “doing masculinity”, (Messerschmidt, 1993: 81) identifies how violence in prison can have a high communicative value (Crawley and Crawley, 2008). It can be utilised as a means of heightening personal visibility and displaying the self-relative to others (Sloan, 2016). Thus, through public displays of violence within Hydebank, young men were engaging in specific inter-personal interactions as a means of promoting a violent expression of masculinity to the other young men. This utilisation of violence as a means of “doing masculinity” (Messerschmidt, 1993: 81) was a method of showing others that they would not be taken advantage of, presenting a socially accepted violent expression of masculinity to the audience. As evidenced in the quotes, this was recognised by the young men as being a tactical decision. Some interviewees spoke of advising friends or relatives to employ this tactic upon entrance, even before the ‘masculinity test’ occurs:

My wee brother... I’ll be saying to him “whenever you’re over [moved to Hydebank from Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre] ... be quiet and just listen to see who the most feared one is and say something to him and if he starts something knock him the fuck out”... Cause you say like the Bower boys [one of the gangs in Hydebank], the one that leads them all... the big hard one they are all feared of... he is more or less the shepherd, so you hit the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter. That’s the way it is, that’s what I done, so I would advise my wee brother or a cousin or something that comes in here, or a good mate, I’d say the same. (Phillip)

This utilisation of violence as a means of doing masculinity is not something that was unique to Hydebank. Within highly masculinised prison environments a range of expressions of masculinity can be utilised “to ensure emotional, psychological and social survival, employing strategies to mask self-perceived weakness or vulnerability and to attain status and legitimacy” (De Viggiani, 2012: 271). The removal of emotional expression and replacement of this with public displays of violence was perceived by some to be an essential survival technique in Hydebank. In Brendy’s interview he identifies that if you did not react violently in the ‘masculinity test’ you would be labelled a ‘buckler’, somewhat lesser of a man. This term ‘buckler’ was commonly used, as is highlighted in Gary’s interview:

I had to do something or everyone would think I was a soft touch, so I jumped up and punched him in the face and just kept going, I punched him the whole way across the room and into the grille and when he fell down I started kneeing him in the face... if someone comes up to you like that you have to do something, if you don't it's called 'buckling'.

Drawing upon literature which explores masculinities within the wider NI context, Reilly et al., (2004) found that labels and stigmatisation were commonplace in situations where young men from lower socio-economic backgrounds utilised alternative responses to violence. They found, in a similar vein to this study's findings in Hydebank, that displaying any form of weakness or failing to act in a violent manner often resulted in homophobic labelling, you could be labelled a "poof" amongst other terms (Reilly et al., 2004: 476). Through the observations and interviews conducted in Hydebank it was evident that labelling those young men who displayed signs of weakness or responded to confrontation in a non-violent way, with terms such as 'buckler' or other homophobic terminology, was a method of social subordination and often resulted in young men being deemed 'vulnerable'. The label 'vulnerable' was used by the young men to describe anyone perceived as weak or susceptible to bullying or victimisation. The young men also talked of testing the prison staff. New staff, labelled 'shiny keys', would be tested to see how they responded to their first periods of working in the prison (the power relations between young men and staff is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6):

They are new, their keys haven't been broken in, so they have 'shiny keys', that's what I call them. They are fucking constantly trying to get a name for themselves [*Sort of the same as what you said it was like when you first came in, you know you can't let anyone take a wee bit of advantage of you?*] Yeah sort of the same, they have to say "no" when they've only came in, like the likes of Nigel... when he came in he was making boys toast and putting it under their door at night. That was him five, six years ago and now he still gets nothing off the boys. Everyone's like "fuck up Nigel you specky cunt", "fucking get that done" or "fucking do that now". You're just telling him what to do. Us telling him what to do, not him telling us what to do. (Brendy)

It is evident from Brendy's quote that because Nigel did not embody the hegemonic characteristics the young men idealised, they perceived that he was weak, someone who was easy to manipulate and subsequently who they feel they have autonomy over. It was evident from both the observations and interviews within Hydebank, that strict emotional control was imperative to survival for young men within the

institution. Setting the constitution of these tough and stoical masculinities within the wider context, studies conducted with young men in working-class NI communities (see Harland and McCready, 2014), identify that emotional control is something which young men are socialised into from a young age. It is evident from the interview quotes throughout this section that the need for emotional control becomes reinforced in prison. Within Hydebank's prisoner society any signs of vulnerability or perceived weakness were identified and exposed via the 'masculinity test'. As a response to the test, some of the young men portrayed violent expressions of masculinity as a means of deterring future victimisation. The commonplace of violence within the institution will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

5.4 The normalisation of violence

There are wide ranging definitions of violence. For the purpose of this research, the World Health Organisation's (WHO) (2002: 5) definition is best suited, which states that violence is:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation.

Young men within NI are disproportionately involved as perpetrators and as victims of violence compared to women counterparts (Harland and McCready, 2015). It is evident that violence by men is not a unique problem to NI community, rather it is a global problem (Pringle and Pease, 2001; Pringle, 2007). However, violence needs to be contextualised within local, cultural, historical and political frameworks (McAlister et al., 2013). Research suggests that within the NI context, a history of over 40 years of violent ethno-nationalist conflict "significantly shapes and influences the everyday lives of young people, and in particular boys and young men from working-class and inner-city areas" (Harland and McCready, 2015: 55).

The appreciation of context and cultural environment enhance our understanding of men's violence. Harland and McCready (2015) extract some of the

key tenets of the ‘social ecological theory of behaviour’ in their aim of exploring the relationship between boys, young men and violence within NI. The authors refer to the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) who argued that in understanding the behaviour of young people, the influence of environment could not be underestimated. Harland and McCready (2015: 73) state that young people “imitate what they see, repeat what they hear and think according to what they are told”. Building upon social ecological theories of behaviour, Harland (2009) argues that the prolonged period of conflict and violent deaths of over 3,700 people (see Joyce and Lynch, 2015) continues to have a significant impact on the construction of masculinities within NI (Harland, 2009).

Young men in NI are raised in communities where mural “representations of hard men cover urban spaces” (Ashe and Harland, 2014: 752). These images of balaclava-adorned gunmen are celebrated as individuals who protected their community (Ashe and Harland, 2014). This provided these men with feelings of power, respect and purpose within the community (Murray, 1995). Although, as discussed in the next section, many young men in Hydebank did not idealise paramilitary organisations, the impact of the murals is to normalise the notion of male violence as powerful and a means of gaining community respect. Hansson’s (2005) study found that young people from segregated inner city areas such as Belfast and Derry/Londonderry often actively initiated and participated in violence at interface areas as a means of recreation. Hansson (2005: 95) stated that young men’s “attitudes have been shaped by experiences of persistent sectarian and communal violence and many young people continue to experience intimidation and violence as part of their daily lives”.

The purpose of highlighting the history of conflict and the continued presence of paramilitary organisations in NI communities is not to suggest that these are the sole reasons young men from lower socio-economic backgrounds are perpetrators of violence but to demonstrate how this history contributes to the normalisation of violence. This provides the foundations for examining violent expressions of masculinity within Hydebank, where a culture of violence, bullying and intimidation was overt. The extent to which violence had become normalised was highlighted by

the sheer volume of fights many of the young men had experienced within the institution¹⁵:

[Why how many fights have you been in?] Countless, I couldn't count *[More than 20?]* Oh fuck aye, far more than 20, far more. I had three fights in one day. Like straight after each other. I fought first time in the morning, got locked. Got out for my lunch, fighting again. And then I had asso [association time], they let me out and I was fighting again. Three fights, one day. (Martin)

[How many fights have you been in in Hydebank?] Fucking hell man, I've been in over two and a half years it would be a lot like, a lot *[More than 20?]* Aye well over 20 *[40?]* Aye I'd say around 40 or 50 *[How do you feel after you get into a fight?]* Good. I'm used to it. I was born to it, I've been taught how to fight all my life, I've been fighting all my life. When I was a kid my Da used to set up a wee ring with rope and sticks and he used to get me standing inside it with the gloves on and get all the wee Travellers over... and he would say "if you can beat my son you get a fiver". I know that might sound bad, but it made me a hard man. (Phillip)

As is clearly identifiable in both quotations the extent to which fighting occurs within the institution suggests a normality and desensitisation to violence amongst some of the young men in Hydebank. Phillip's quote highlights the nature of violence within the wider NI context, it is a normality, something which has transcended generations, "I was born to it", "I've been taught how to fight all my life"; and largely supports Ashe and Harland's (2014) claims that young men aspire to role models and other masculinities that promote violence. It also highlights how this normality of violence becomes imported into the prison setting and shapes masculinities within Hydebank. Phillip's quote also connects the social action of violence to expressions of masculinity and the concept of manhood, violence makes him a "hard man". This connection between violence and manhood was a key characteristic in Phillip's masculinity, a man is someone who can fight. This was further evidenced later in his interview:

I knocked him out and he couldn't take it like a man, know what I mean, if you get beat take it like a man, take it on the chin, he lost fair and square, I'm the better man. (Phillip)

¹⁵ The amount of fights the young men had been in was not one of the pre-determined questions for the interviews. However, it emerged as a topic of conversation on a large number of occasions.

It is evident in the interview with Phillip that he considers violence and capabilities of fighting as the principal factors in the definition of manhood, “he lost fair and square, I am the better man”. The better, more dominant man is the superior and more violent fighter. The other young man is subordinate to him because his fighting skills are inferior. Studies conducted in the wider NI context, such as Reilly et al. (2004) found that violence was a common feature in young working-class men’s lives and that violent responses were expected in most forms of disagreement. In Hydebank violent confrontations were responses to the most minor disputes:

It’s just what happens, it could be over anything. I have fought over boxes of cereal so I have, you know the wee small boxes you get outside. I fought over wee boxes of cereal, I have fought over toast, I fought over a space in the shower, a space on the phone, I fought over a brush, a mop bucket on the landing. I have fought over everything. (Martin)

Anything, fair dig¹⁶ over a roll-up fuck sake. I’ve seen less, I have seen people fight over packets of biscuits at the weekend like... or else chocolate cake, some mad things like. (Ryan)

While the deprivation of goods and services places extra importance on seemingly minor items in prison (Sykes, 1958), fighting over seemingly minor issues was also a salient finding in Reilly et al.’s (2004) study in the wider NI context. They found young marginalised men could not identify alternatives to violent behaviour and felt there was no other means of settling minor disputes (Reilly et al., 2004). Connell, (1987; 1995) attempts to explain this presence of violence in some young men. She suggests that marginalised masculinities are unable to achieve the characteristics of the hegemonic ideal because of certain traits, such as socio-economic status, poverty, race or ethnicity. She argues that as a result, some men who are marginalised attempt to emphasise characteristics of hegemonic masculinity – such as violence, stoicism and aggression – to overcome feelings of marginalisation and powerlessness. Connell suggests that these masculinities are more common in young men, labelling them ‘protest masculinities’. These young men can experience feelings of power and dominance over other marginalised young men (Connell, 1987; 1995).

16 A fair dig was a fair fight. A one-on-one contest, with no-one else getting involved or interfering.

Although the commonplace nature of violence in young men in wider NI society clearly permeated Hydebank's walls, the nature of imprisonment was also a significant factor in the construction of violent masculinities within the prison. Similar to other prison studies (see Sykes, 1958; Goffman, 1961; Cesaroni and Alvi, 2010), it is evident that Hydebank is a gendered institution, characterised by power, dominance and control over prisoners. Through its implementation of incapacitation, the prison removes avenues for achieving characteristics associated with traditional masculinities in the wider social context, such as autonomy, heterosexual relations and provision for family. As a result, alternative methods for achieving masculinity are utilised. For example, public displays of violence become a means of communicating to others a violent expression of masculinity. This is clearly visible from the interviews showing that minor disputes over cereal, toast and biscuits result in violent physical encounters within the prison setting.

While the importance of these apparent minor amenities within the prison setting could be a factor in expressions of violence (see Sykes, 1958; Goffman, 1961; Mathiesen, 1965), most of the young men in Hydebank showed little regard for more peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. Exploring the prevalence of violence through the lens of critical masculinities studies, in the same vein as the 'masculinity test', violence was again a method of "doing masculinity" (Messerschmidt, 1993: 81). Through public displays of violence over minor issues, the young men were utilising specific violent inter-personal actions as a method of presenting a violent, expression of masculinity to their peers. Violence in this regard was a method of showing others that they will not be taken advantage of. Martin illustrates this:

If you go to for a brush on the landing and someone lifts it in front of you, you couldn't let him lift it because you were going for it ... he must have seen you going for it, so the fact that he lifted it means that he didn't want you to have it. So you just hit first, ask questions later.

Intricately linked with the belief, that you could not be seen to be taken advantage of, was the concept of maintaining 'face'. Again this was a salient finding in Reilly et al. (2004) where violence was used as a public method of maintaining face, that young men could not be seen by other young men to be taken advantage of in any way and thus had to maintain this strong powerful expression of masculinity. This

draws similarities with Goffman's (1955) work regarding self-image. Goffman (1955) argues that self-image is constructed in conjunction with social expectations and an individual portrays a self-image in relation to what they perceive to be accepted social attributes. Within Hydebank it was evident that a violent self-image was important to the young men in order to maintain face. Other key elements of Goffman's (1955) study surrounding self-image were pertinent to young men's experiences within Hydebank. In relation to circumstances where there was a perceived failure of the self-presented image, where an individual becomes 'out of face', Goffman argues the social actor adjusts his positioning in an attempt to regain face (Goffman, 1955). Attempts to regain face were common in Hydebank. When individuals were beaten, or being beaten, in a fight they would resort to a more violent reaction as a response, in an attempt to recuperate some of their publically displayed masculinity and self-image. For example:

So anyway after that [Noel beat him in a fight] ... I was walking up, I had my back turned to him and he fucked a flask around me... (boiling water) with sugar in it, it lifted all sorts of skin off my back ... the t-shirt and all sticks (to you) and then you have to tear it off. It's bad like, I'm all scarred down there. (Noel)

I was punching the head off him up against the wall and hit him uppercut after uppercut but I put my head down and he bit me on the ear and just latched on and wouldn't let go... On the landing I'm gonna sit beside a vase or something in case he comes to try and stab me and then I can just crack him over the head with it. (Kevin)

These attempts to recuperate masculinity or 'save face' through a more violent response than punching, identifies not only the normalisation of violence for the young men, but also the importance of how one's masculinity is perceived by others. To go as far as publically¹⁷ scalding or biting an individual is a measure of displaying to the wider audience that even if someone has the upper hand in a physical encounter a more extreme measure of violence will be utilised, thus maintaining the violently portrayed self-image. Obviously this was not the case for every young man in Hydebank. There were a variety of other expressions of masculinity within the institution as discussed in later chapters. However, only 6 out of 26 of the young

¹⁷ A majority of the fights took place in areas where the staff could not see, but both of these incidents happened in communal areas.

men who participated in interviews declared they had never been in any physical altercations within the prison.

This section's focus on violent expressions of masculinity has evidenced that a desensitisation and normality of violence found amongst young men in the wider NI context has permeated the prison environment. As has also been discussed, the violence in the wider NI context is not the sole cause of violent expressions of masculinity within Hydebank. Institutional barriers remove avenues for attaining traditional expressions of masculinity and result in public displays of violence as an adaption to the harsh prison environment. It has been highlighted how wider social issues within NI have contributed to a belief within young men that violence is the best solution to any form of minor dispute (Reilly et al., 2004). Statistically violence is associated with men, who are more often the perpetrators of armed robbery, murder, rape, street violence and domestic violence. Indeed, the present situation highlights a direct relationship between violence and young men, however to view this relationship as innate is problematic. As has been highlighted earlier, gender is an active social practice, it is fluid, malleable and adaptable and can be contested on a daily basis. The male body "does not confer masculinity... it receives masculinity (or some fragment thereof) as its social definition" (Connell, 1987: 83). It is evident that there is a normalisation of violence for young men within NI, however this should not be regarded as concrete. Instead, identities should be challenged with a focus on reshaping perceptions and forms of knowledge regarding young men and violence.

While the normalisation of violence for young men in Hydebank and wider NI society has been discussed throughout this section thus far, further societal issues pose a threat to challenging the existing forms of knowledge which associate young men with violence. Paramilitaries pose a significant, violent threat and many of the young men in Hydebank had been victims of paramilitary violence within their communities. The relationship between young men and paramilitaries is discussed in the next section.

5.5 Young men's common and conflicting interactions with paramilitary organisations

Through discussion with young men regarding violence and victimisation during observations and interviews, the majority cited paramilitaries as a source of violent victimisation in their lives outside prison. Throughout the conflict young working-class men were provided with opportunities to attain status and communal purpose through the perceived protection and defence of their community (Hamber and Gallagher, 2014). Paramilitary organisations during the Troubles offered young men a position of responsibility, a sense of belonging, respect and power amongst peers (Creary and Byrne, 2014). This perceived violent defence of the community re-affirmed masculinities and roles in these areas (Ashe and Harland, 2014). Since the Good Friday Agreement (1998) there has been an overall reduction in political violence, however paramilitaries still operate within working-class communities, particularly in relation to systems of punishment. These punishments largely target perpetrators of theft, joy-riding and anti-social behaviour. Although these informal systems are brutal, some theorists argue they cannot operate without a certain amount of support from the community (McEvoy and Mika, 2001; 2002).

Longitudinal research conducted by Harland and McCready (2014), with young working-class men in NI, highlights an on-going concern regarding personal safety and perceived normality of violence. The participants found little in the community or social institutions by way of support and reported regular conflict with police and members of paramilitary organisations. The study highlighted that there was still a strong paramilitary presence and control in working-class communities. This was a salient feature in many young men's lives who had experiences of the organisations inflicting punishments on them, and their friends, for anti-social behaviour (Harland and McCready, 2014). In what is termed "paramilitary policing" (Topping and Byrne, 2012: 1), paramilitary organisations conduct punishment beatings, shootings and community exile as a brutal form of justice (Napier et al., 2017). The brutality of paramilitary attacks is felt the most by the demographic of young men held in Hydebank: under the age of 25, male, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with low levels of educational achievement and largely marginalised by NI community (Smyth, 1998; Feenan, 2002). These interactions with paramilitary

organisations in the community prior to their imprisonment in Hydebank, were discussed by the young men:

I was lying in bed when I felt a pain in my knee, I thought it was my brother coming home blocked [drunk] so I jumped up and pushed him. Then I got cracked in the face with the bottom of the gun and realised it was the provos [PIRA]. I moved back against the wall and they shot at me again and missed fuck sake. They fired two more times and both fucking hit me in the same knee... the blood was shooting out like a super-soaker. (Jack)

Aye I've been beat numerous times by paramilitaries, death threats, hands broke, arms broke, tried to do my legs. (Markus)

The majority of the young men in Hydebank had experiences of paramilitary policing. Indeed, 16 of the 26 interviewees had experienced violent interactions with the organisations. Jack was one of a larger amount of young men who had experienced being shot by one of the paramilitaries. Other young men spoke of being beaten by sewer rods, having breeze blocks dropped on them to break bones and being violently attacked by groups of men. These forms of 'rough justice' shape how young people within NI understand law and order (McAlister et al., 2009) and distort understandings of violence and how to deal with disputes or situations through alternative measures (as discussed in 5.3). The presence of these paramilitary organisations contributes to the normalisation of violence for young men within Hydebank and plays a significant factor in their plans for the future. An example of this was outlined by Dermý:

[Do you have any worries about getting out?] Aye just cause I have a death threat, know what I mean, so if I get out I will probably be shot, know what I mean, so that's the only worry... they [paramilitaries] say to you to get out of the country and if you don't get out they come and shoot you... they turn round and ask you to meet them somewhere like in an alley and they shoot you twice, three times or if they have to come and get you they shoot you five, six times. (Dermý)

This normalisation of violence is evident as Dermý casually describes his death threat as if it was a common occurrence "I will probably be shot, know what I mean". Another element in the relationship between the young men and the paramilitaries was the hypocrisy of the paramilitary groups, often punishing the young men for acts of criminality that the paramilitaries were involved in themselves, such as drug

dealing (Hourigan et al., 2018). In this regard, the young men often compared modern paramilitary organisations to paramilitaries of the past, for example:

See down my way there is paramilitaries ... they are all about 50 or 60 [years of age], they are all old men that went through the Troubles years ago ... that's a proper paramilitary. See now, see a paramilitary these days, it's just all drugs, money, guns, just all shit like that... that's not a paramilitary, a paramilitary should be there to protect people in their own area from other people coming in and wrecking and burgling the place, all wee hoods. That's a paramilitary that stops all crime. (Jordan)

The reported involvement of paramilitary groups in “drugs” and “money” as outlined by Jordan was common amongst the young men, leaving them to view the paramilitaries as just gangs and uninvolved in the protection of the community. It was unsurprising therefore that almost all of the young men spoke with distaste about the paramilitaries. Graffiti showing their disregard was conspicuous around the walls of the prison and some took an extra step, getting tattoos to cement their contempt. As Dee stated “I’m FAP all the way [*What’s that?*] Fuck all paramilitaries, I’ve got it tattooed on my leg”. Elements of power and control underpinned the antagonistic relationship between the paramilitaries and the young men who often refused to acknowledge the dominant position of paramilitary organisations in the community. Dee provides insight into the relationship between the young men and paramilitary members:

They think they run it. Like see the likes of the drugs and all that run through Belfast, like you can’t sell nothing without them knowing or if you are selling it you’ll get a wild hiding [beating], (or) you’ll pay them £5,000 because you are selling on their turf, know what I mean. It’s the same everywhere like, you have to pay them some sort of money to, you know, sell on their patch, but it’s not the way we work ... fucking UDA think they run Belfast, but they don’t [*Who does?*] Hoods¹⁸. (Dee)

Although, the conflict between the gangs of “Hoods” and paramilitaries for power in the community largely stemmed from the anti-social behaviour conducted by the

18 The term “hoods” is defined by Reilly et al. (2004: 474) as “local gang members”. The term was commonplace within Hydebank. Large numbers of the young men referred to themselves as being ‘hoods’. The gangs would be largely comprised of residents from the same area or estate and they would often name themselves in correlation with this, for example ‘Burl Road Hoods’ or ‘Bower [Estate] Hoods’.

young men, the desire to hold power and control is not abnormal amongst two groups predominantly made up by men. Earle and Phillips (2009) found young men possess strong gendered and spatialised identities, arguing that in many circumstances the area the young men derived from was a central tenet in their identities (Earle and Phillips, 2009) leading to a strong sense of “Postcode Pride” (Earle, 2011: 138). Similarly, Robins and Cohen’s (1978) study suggests that participation in the symbolic process of ‘running’ or ‘owning’ a geographical location is of the utmost importance, culturally, for working-class young men. This is evident in Dee’s interview where he states that the “fucking UDA think they run Belfast, but they don’t [*Who does?*] Hoods”. This was reiterated by Paddy:

They [paramilitaries] think they are king dicks, but they are just eejits. Like if it keeps happening... boys like me with guns... we have masks on, we have guns, let’s fucking go... hoods against the dissidents. You know who would win that like [*No. Who?*] The hoods obviously. There is more hoods than them, we can steal cars, we can do burglaries, we can commit all sorts of crime ... they always say the criminal mind is the smartest. (Paddy)

As is evident from both Paddy’s and Dee’s interviews, feelings of power and control are important to some young men in Hydebank. It is also evident that the importance of power and control to young men stems from the community setting and shapes masculinities prior to imprisonment. This emphasis placed on power and control is then imported into the prison setting where particular gangs of ‘hoods’ hold a significant degree of power and control over the wider population of young men; achieved through fear, violence and intimidation (as discussed in Chapter 6). Finally, in relation to paramilitaries, their widespread historical communal support (McEvoy and Mika, 2001; 2002) can exacerbate the marginalisation of the young men. This is not only social, but also physical as paramilitaries have the power and communal support to exile young men from the communities. The power of paramilitaries is illustrated through Kyle’s interview:

I used to sell grass mate... I made a bit of money for myself like and had a nice two-bedroom house, but eventually, like it is either their way or the high way to them, like it is alright for them to knock it out [sell drugs], their coke, their grass, like if you are buying it off them it is sweet, but if you are knocking out your own grass or whatever know what I mean, different story. They don’t like that. So then they tried putting me out [exiling from community] and sent someone around one of my houses, tried telling me to leave

and I turned around and said “aye whatever” and shut the door and the fella left. Next thing I know three came to my door and said “this is your final warning you have got the next hour to be out of here and we are coming back in an hour and if you are still here blah, blah, blah”, they sent an official death threat to the police and within half an hour of them leaving the police were at my door saying you need to get out fuck sake... I knew it was paramilitary like so I packed my stuff up and ended up moving out to a different place. (Kyle)

As is evident through the interview with Kyle, many of the young men had experienced physical marginalisation and exclusion from the communities they had grown up in and where their families and partners lived. Quite often local community members would report anti-social behaviour to the paramilitaries who would subsequently exile the young men, often rendering them homeless or forcing them to move to another part of the city, country or even further afield. This form of illicit social control contributes to the further social marginalisation of young men in NI. The next section focuses on how community-based unwritten rules govern young men’s interactions with each other and permeate the prison walls and shape expressions of masculinity in Hydebank.

5.6 Unwritten Rules: peer regulation of masculinities

Harland and McCready’s (2014: 273) research identified how “unwritten rules” define young working-class men’s lives within NI. The authors reported that boys and young men could not report any form of criminality or victimisation to any form of authoritative figure, such as police, parents or teachers, out of the fear of being labelled as a ‘tout’ or ‘grass’. Their study highlighted the growing acknowledgment and conformity to these rules as participants got older, measuring the difference between early adolescence (age 11-13) and mid-adolescence (14-16). The authors found that 48.8 percent of those at a younger age refused to report victimisation of violence to the police or any other form of authoritative figure, compared to the significant increase of 68 percent of the older age group refusing to report an incident (Harland and McCready, 2014). The significant refusal to talk to authority was a key characteristic of young men’s identity within Hydebank. This is not uncommon in prison research (as evidenced in Chapter 3), and studies such as Sykes (1958) and Cohen and Taylor (1972) identified the existence of an ‘inmate code’ amongst the prisoner society. This was a socially established code of conduct which monitored

the behaviours, values and attitudes of prisoners, of which do not 'rat' was a key principle. Parallels existed between this and Hydebank where the number one 'unwritten rule' was not to talk to the staff. Brendy highlights this:

...it's all one game, it's us against themins... don't talk to them. See if you open your mouth once to a screw and someone on the landing hears it, its "tout", "tout", "tout", "tout", "tout" [to 'tout' was to 'rat' or pass the staff information] around the floor, from door to door. Then before you know it people will be saying "he told the screw everything about this" and everyone is running about getting everything moved and he will get battered [beat up] like. It causes a whole lot of hassle if anybody hears it, even though it mightn't be true. Like a guy got sliced down the face in Beech house, like one person said he was a tout, know what I mean, and the wee lad didn't even do anything. Didn't do nothing at all... the wee man just came straight out onto the landing and bang straight down the face and the skin was hanging down here you know [gestures to face], the screws were having to hold it up for him. (Brendy)

In the same vein as 'tout' the young men in Hydebank were labelled 'screw-licks' or 'rats' if they were seen to be interacting with the staff. This stigmatisation, as displayed in Brendy's quote, could result in violent attacks or the social and even physical marginalisation of young men to the 'vulnerable' landing (discussed in greater detail Chapter 8). As with other prison studies, (see Sykes, 1958; Cohen and Taylor, 1972), breaking the unwritten rules could have serious repercussions in Hydebank, whether the young men were 'touting' or not. This draws similarities to the wider NI community where a 'code of silence' or 'honour' existed during the Troubles and continued after the Good Friday agreement. The code was adhered to by the IRA and UDA and demanded silence on the part of their volunteers. The price to pay for breaking the code was execution and torture (Dillon, 1990). This code is widely recognised within NI society and was even publically adhered to by the late former deputy First Minister of NI Martin McGuinness. At the inquest into 'Bloody Sunday' he famously stated "I am prepared to go to jail. I would rather die than destroy my code of honour to the IRA" (cited in Kelly and Erwin, 2003). Other examples, such as the brutal public murder of Robert McCartney (allegedly by the IRA), highlight the 'code of silence' present in communities. McCartney was murdered in a local Republican bar where there were apparently many witnesses present, yet no-one would come forward and provide evidence to the police

(Hallsworth and Young, 2008). The unwritten rules in Hydebank were outlined by Martin:

You can't do what staff tell you when you come in. Staff tell you don't fight, don't do this, don't do that. Don't listen to themins, you are better off listening to inmates. Know what I mean, you will get two sets of rules... you have the staffs' and then it's obvious... [the prisoners' rules] don't tout, don't steal off other inmates, don't do anything that is going to stop other inmates doing stuff. (Martin)

These unwritten rules discussed by Martin, draw a lot of similarities to the inmate code described by Sykes (1958). In Sykes' study, the code was largely linked to the shared pains of imprisonment. However, within Hydebank through observations and interviews it was evident that the code was linked to a power hierarchy (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6) amongst the young men where certain groups maintained dominance through violence, bullying and the informal economy, primarily drugs and mobile phones. The connection between the inmate code and the power hierarchy is evident in both Martin's and Brendy's quotes: Martin mentions "don't do anything that is going to stop other inmates doing stuff" and Brendy mentions that breach of the code results in "everyone is running about getting everything moved". Breaking the unwritten rules by talking to staff threatens the informal economy and may disrupt what Brendy refers to as a "tight ship". Breach of the unwritten rules often resulted in a violent response by dominant prisoners, "he will get battered like" (Brendy). Gary supported this:

You know like there's a lot of fighting goes on in here and it's not down to I'm a Protestant, you're a Catholic or anything like that, it's pure dominance. (Gary)

Other unwritten rules which related to the informal economy revolved around the concept of responsibility and the disruption of the "tight ship" (Brendy). Those who were responsible for damaging or drawing attention to the informal economy must take responsibility. This became apparent to the researcher when talking with one of the young men during the participant observation. Due to the long narrow wings in Hydebank if the young men wished to pass something from one end of the corridor to the other they could do so by pushing an object under their cell door and sliding it up to the next cell, where the young men could pull it into their cell or slide it on to the next young man in the next cell. So essentially, an object could be passed from

one end of the landing to the other during periods of lockup. However, if an illicit object was being passed and it did not reach its intended destination, whoever was the break in the chain – whoever’s cell the illicit object was found outside – was held responsible. The repercussions of this were explained by Francis who had just returned to Hydebank for breach of licence and was on the committal landing. The excerpt is taken from field notes:

Rachel told me that Francis was back in, I was shocked as I was convinced he would not be back. She said he had not left his cell since he had returned... The ‘buds’¹⁹ got found by staff outside his cell so he was the one who had to pay for them. It was standard prison rules; the debt was £90. Francis was supposed to get someone from his family to meet Leo's sister in town to pay the debt or do it himself when he was out. He didn't do it because he thought he would never be back. The debt had now doubled because it wasn't paid. Leo was on a different landing so he had paid for another group of young men to jump him on the landing. For this reason, he hadn't left his cell since he came back in.
(July)

Setting the constitution of masculinities found in Hydebank within their wider NI context, young men are socialised into conforming to unwritten rules established within the community setting prior to entering the institution. While unwritten rules may vary between the community and prison contexts, it is evident from the excerpt taken from the July field notes that breach of the unwritten rules within Hydebank can have serious consequences, such as increased debts and violent victimisation. Analysing these unwritten rules through the lens of masculinities it is evident that what it means to be a man in Hydebank is: loyalty to the ‘inmate code’, aspirations for power and dominance in the prisoner hierarchy, resistance towards the prison regime and accountability and taking responsibility over your actions. The staff largely recognised these unwritten rules as well, however they looked at them with a deeper concern and recognised how damaging these concepts of manhood and unwritten rules could be for the young men (explored in more detail in Chapter 8), as was evident in the interviews:

Well yeah obviously there's the old you can't tout... even whenever it could really help somebody to get over a difficult problem. But, “I'm no tout” and they have this notion that

¹⁹ Benzodiazepine and other tablets such as Lyrica.

there is a code of honour that they don't... even whenever it's averse to theirs or their friend's health. And sometimes they don't get that it is for their benefit. (Prison Officer B)

Exploring the impact of this masculine peer regulation, the perception that the young men could not talk to the staff, even if it was something concerning, as identified by Prison Officer B, was in many circumstances damaging for young men. Indeed, it often contributed to some resorting to other damaging coping mechanisms such as self-harm or substance misuse to deal with the problems they were having (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8).

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter recognises that expressions of masculinity and prison culture in Hydebank were shaped by both internal and external factors. Setting the constitution of Hydebank's masculinities within the wider NI context, this chapter has examined how key cultural influences such as marginalisation, emotional control, violence, paramilitaries and unwritten rules permeate the prison walls and shape masculinities in Hydebank. At present, young men within working-class communities in NI are experiencing a sense of "alienation, perceived normality of violence, unwelcomed interactions with paramilitary members and restrictive notions of masculinity" (Harland and McCready, 2014: 1). These wider social problems are exacerbated within the masculine prison setting reinforcing violent, dominant and stoical expressions of masculinity. These masculinities can negatively shape young men's experiences of prison as has been evidenced throughout this chapter and is discussed in greater detail throughout the thesis.

This chapter has highlighted findings regarding emotional fortitude in young men within the wider NI context. These stoical approaches to emotions found within young men in NI communities are emphasised within the masculine prison environment and manifest into expressions of masculinity which emphasise the need for stringent emotional control and rejection of all traits which can be perceived to be a sign of "weakness" (Prison Officer A). Emphasising the importance of these traits, a 'masculinity test' was commonplace within the institution as a means of measuring the masculinities of new prisoners. Concealing weakness and portraying

a strong, aggressive and violent persona was a key survival strategy, “you have to belt them like” (Brendy). Thus, masculinity is tested. Violence in prison has high communicative value, it is a method of “doing masculinity” (Messerschmidt, 1993: 81). Through the observations and interviews it was clear that if a prisoner did not respond to confrontations through violence they were deemed to be a “buckler” (Brendy), somewhat lesser of a man.

The regularity of violence within the institution reflects violent expressions of masculinity within the wider NI context. NI has a history of over 40 years of violent ethno-nationalist conflict which has significantly shaped the lives of young men within working-class communities (Harland and McCready, 2015). This wider context has contributed to a normalisation of violence amongst young working-class men in NI. This normalisation of violence clearly transcended the prison environment where young men spoke of being involved in numerous fights over the smallest of issues such as cereal and toast. While these issues clearly stem from wider NI society, they become exacerbated within the prison context. Evidence from interviews and observations of Hydebank found that violence was a method utilised by young men to maintain a self-image (also see Goffman, 1955) constructed in line with social and cultural expectations.

The regularity of violence prior to prison included violent interactions with paramilitary organisations. Many of the young men had experienced some form of ‘policing’ at the hands of paramilitary organisations, experiencing death threats, being shot and broken bones. These incidents further contribute to the normalisation of violence and distorted notions of justice amongst the prisoner demographic within Hydebank. Some authors argue the paramilitaries’ hold a certain degree of communal support (McEvoy and Mika, 2001; 2002) and as a result feelings of social marginalisation are heightened with many young men pessimistic about job prospects, community exile and general life in the community.

Finally, unwritten rules which regulate young working-class men’s lives in the wider NI community (Harland and McCready, 2014) permeate the prison walls. These rules defined many young men’s lives within Hydebank, with severe and violent repercussions delivered for those who broke the unwritten conduct requirements, of which do not ‘tout’ was the principal rule. These rules were

essential to the maintenance and governance of the informal economy within the institution. The combination of all of these community-based issues facing young men in NI shaped expressions of masculinity within Hydebank. Within the institution, many masculinities were characterised by violence, aggression and stoicism, but the seeds for these masculinities were sown in NI communities. These characteristics were largely damaging to the young men physically through victimisation and violent incidents, but also mentally as discussed in Chapter 8.

6 Research findings: Power, prison and young men

6.1 Introduction

Building on the analysis in Chapter 5 which set the constitution of masculinities found in Hydebank within the wider NI context, this chapter explores the different power relations affecting young men within Hydebank and how these relations shape expressions of masculinity within the prison. As highlighted in the previous chapter, expressions of masculinity within Hydebank were characterised by unwritten rules, emotional stoicism and attempts to feel powerful in situations of marginalisation. These expressions of masculinity are influenced by wider social issues which emphasise the need for strong emotional control, struggles for authority and contravening feelings of power and powerlessness stemming from interactions with paramilitary organisations and social marginalisation. Control and power are key elements of dominant expressions of masculinity within most social settings (Connell, 1987; 2002). However, in relation to young men in prison, (as discussed in Chapter 3) feelings of loss of power and control are pertinent (Crewe, 2009). Prisons as institutions are invasive, undermining the autonomy of their inhabitants. As a result, some prisoners adapt and resist the institution and staff in the aim of maintaining some form of self-determination. This includes engaging in specific behaviours as a means of “doing masculinity” (Messerschmidt, 1993: 81) and to achieve a sense of power and control amongst the inter-prisoner group.

As discussed throughout this thesis thus far, power relations are central to the construction of expressions of masculinity (Paechter, 2006), as a result challenges to feelings of power largely affect men’s experiences of prison (Crewe, 2009). Based on the findings of the research, this chapter explores how power relationships affect young men’s experiences of prison within the context of Hydebank. To achieve this, the chapter is structured around three power relationships which impact young men’s prison experiences. These are: the relationship between Hydebank as an institution and the young men; the relationship between the prison staff and the young men; and finally, the inter-prisoner relationships.

6.2 Young men and Institutional Power

This section explores the gendered power relationship between young men and the prison. It discusses how young men in Hydebank experience and negotiate institutional power and how this shapes expressions of masculinity within the cultural setting. This section is broken into three sub-sections, each exploring a differing aspect of the gendered power relationship between the institution and young men. These sub-sections focus on: how the institution controls young men's behaviour through "soft power" (Crewe, 2009; 2011); how the implementation of the PREPS alongside Hydebank's institutional design creates a power vacuum within the prisoner society; and finally, how the institution creates feelings of vulnerability and subordination within the young men.

Historically prison institutions have been designed by men to control other men. As a result, ultramasculine stereotypes permeate the prison walls and structure the nature of punishment and practice of their inhabitants (Lutze, 2003). The practice of punishment in prison is characterised by power and physical dominance (Scruton et al., 1991; Sim, 1994), thus the authoritative nature of prison reinforces a masculine ideology defined by power and control (Scruton et al., 1991). This is achieved by the dominance of the institution over the prisoners. The institution removes feelings of independence, removes heterosexual experiences and removes legitimate avenues to succeed, provide, work and compete. Sykes (1958: 64) refers to these deprivations as the "pains of imprisonment", pains which go beyond the loss of liberty and impact on how the prisoner perceives himself and how others perceive him. As a result, in some circumstances, expressions emerge which emphasise traditionally masculine traits such as aggression, strength and toughness, in the aim of regaining some form of masculine agency (Morash and Rucker, 1990). Aaron confirms how this change can occur:

You do see it like, you do see people changing themselves just to fit in. It's like fucking school or something, everybody wants to be the fucking cool kid like... in here it is easy for you to fucking lose yourself like, to just change and become a certain way.

These challenges to masculinities stem from the invasive power of the prison, with every element of the prisoner's life being restricted and monitored. Prisons are characterised by the unequal distribution of power, prisoners are placed in a position of subordination, often prompting feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness (Mann, 2012).

The prison setting “is an arena where differentials in power – the capacity to achieve intended outcomes – are more glaringly evident than in most social domains” (Crewe, 2009: 79). As stated by Crewe (2009) there are a variety of power differentials within the prison setting. Most visibly, coercive power is displayed through physical incapacitation, exercised by security doors, prison staff and control and restraint techniques. However, Crewe (2011) argues there has been a shift in power dynamic in the prison. New institutional power is not as directly oppressive as previously, but is now “more gripping – lighter but tighter” (Crewe, 2011: 524). He argues that the previous more overtly oppressive regimes often meant prisoners were afraid of staff and exposed to brutality at times, however they were largely left to their own devices (Crewe, 2011). Crewe (2009; 2011) argues this has been replaced by ‘soft power’ which requires that individuals govern themselves within the context of staffs’ increased use of discretion. New, ‘softer’ domains of power are subsequently less visible. Through ‘soft power’ prisoners self-regulate due to the fear that staff may use their discretion to affect the prisoner’s regime, such as loss of privileges, moving landings, reduced visits, adverse reports (which may affect their sentence) and so on (Crewe, 2009; 2011). Drawing on the works of Sykes (1958) and Foucault (1977), Crewe (2011) highlights that although there may be less physical violence between prison staff and prisoners, that does not make the psychological ‘pains of imprisonment’ such as the deprivation of autonomy and loss of liberty less damaging.

One of the principal mechanisms of ‘soft power’ exercised by institutions is the use of “*manipulation or inducement*” (Crewe, 2009: 82) [emphasis in original]. Power in this regard appeals to the self-interest, needs and desires of individual prisoners (Crewe, 2009). Within the harsh prison environment minor amenities, which may appear trivial to the outsider, can have significant importance to prisoners (Sykes, 1958; Mathiesen, 1965). In environments where there are restrictions placed on individuals in relation to autonomy, possessions, sexual desire and identity, minor amenities such as tobacco, TV, radio and minor financial incentives can be used by those in power to manipulate behaviour (Crewe, 2009).

The introduction of the PREPS (2006) by NIPS has meant that throughout their sentence prisoners are on either ‘basic’, ‘standard’ or ‘enhanced’ regimes which offered different levels of financial incentives, visits and out of cell time. All prisoners enter the prison at ‘standard’, and can be reduced to ‘basic’ through

adverse reports and progress to ‘enhanced’ after six weeks’ compliance and passing drugs tests (Butler and Maruna, 2012). The combination of the PREPS and ‘College’ systems meant that prisoners, on ‘standard regime’, were paid £4 per day, £20 per week, to attend compulsory educational classes, vocational training or variations of employment, either within the centre or in the community. The £20 per week could be spent in the Tuck Shop on minor amenities or saved up to buy larger items such as CD players, speakers and so on.

The combination of the PREPS and ‘College’ systems in Hydebank provided individualised incentives and as a result produced a degree of compliance from the young men. An example of this compliance through ‘manipulation’ or ‘inducement’ could be seen through the free movement of the young men throughout the centre. Young men were trusted to be released from their respective landings in the morning, walk unaccompanied to their relevant sessions and return afterwards in the same fashion (unless they were ‘red-carded’²⁰) (IMB, 2017). Regular compliance with prison regulations during this ‘free movement’ could most likely, be attributed to the individualised daily financial incentives provided to the young men for attending their designated educational and vocational classes. It was rare for incidents to occur during these ‘free movements’, and appears that through individualised financial incentives compliance to prison regulations was achieved. Thus, the power of the institution, exercised through ‘inducement’, manipulates the young men’s behaviour to such an extent that they are co-operating with their own incarceration.

Continuing with this theme, other elements of ‘soft power’, such as “*habit, ritual or fatalistic resignation*” (Crewe, 2009: 83) supported the free movement of the prisoners alongside the incentivised programme. Power exercised through the implementation of repetitiveness results in fatalistic resignation. Fatalistic resignation ensures compliance through the perception that there was no other alternative, the belief that subordination is unalterable and inevitable. An example of fatalistic resignation in practice, was evident through the constant radio communication between the landing staff, the staff at the organisational centre (colloquially known as the ‘Pizza Hut’) and at the various workshops and educational classes the young men were attending. The radio communication

20 If the young men had been given a ‘red-card’ it meant that they would be supervised on a one-to-one basis around the campus by a member of prison staff.

between staff members was constant, meaning staff knew exactly when the young men were leaving the landing and when they had arrived at ‘Pizza Hut’ to register for the class or workshop. The staff at registration then radioed back up to say all the young men were accounted for. Because the communication between the staff was so consistent if any of the young men went unaccounted for on the walk from the landing to the Pizza Hut the staff would know immediately. Young men were aware of the communication as the discourse through the staff radios (walkie-talkies) was via loudspeaker and was audible for those within close proximity. This mundane repetition of practice socialised the young men to the extent that constraint and conformity is instilled in their body and psyche (Foucault, 1977). Therefore, the young men were ‘fatalistic’ and resigned to their plight.

6.2.1 Institutional contribution to the prisoner hierarchy

In terms of the levels of enhancement available to the young men, around 42 percent were on the enhanced regime (CJINI, 2016b), on three residential units in Cedar: C3, C4 and C5. Each higher numerical landing provided more privileges and incentives, such as extra visits, increased weekly expenditure and longer association time. However, because there were only two houses in operation during the fieldwork period this meant all the more compliant prisoners moved to Cedar. All of those on the ‘basic’ and ‘standard’ regimes remained in Beech where they could progress from landings B1-4 dependent on their compliance. Essentially, this meant that, unless young men had just been moved off the committal landing (C1) or were not in Hydebank long enough to progress to Cedar as yet, the young men housed in Beech were those who were less compliant and/or involved in drug consumption. As a result, stigma developed between the two houses and the young men housed in them, as is evident from the quotes from interviews:

Beech house is like a different world. Swear to god it’s mad. Over there no one gives a fuck, they have nothing to lose. Someone starts slabbering, there’s going to be a scrap... In Cedar people have other things to do, people have releases coming up and people don’t want to be back housed... (In Beech) there’s mouse traps all about the place... (mice) are fucking everywhere... because they are all dirty bastards, if there’s not going to be food all over the floors they’re not going to come and eat it... but those fuckers are just messy cunts and they bring it on themselves. (Clinton, Cedar resident)

They don’t talk to you over in Cedar... they look down on you and say “aye scumbag” or something like that... you’re looking back at them saying “listen you’re in jail your-

fucking-self you clown” *[How would you describe the two attitudes?]* We’d probably fuck about, go mad. Themins, they’d sit with their fingers up their holes saying nothing. (Dermy, Beech resident)

[What do you think the differences between the two houses are?] All the queers [points towards Cedar] all the lads [points towards Beech] *[So you’re saying all the ones in Cedar are “queer”?]* Aye all the goody-goodies *[What way do you think the boys in Cedar look at the boys in Beech House?]* Animals *[And what way do you think the ones in Beech look at the ones in Cedar?]* Eejits *[In what sense?]* Well we are all sweet together like, but they are the eejits. They are licking up the screws holes to get over there *[Does it appeal to you to go over there at all?]* I couldn’t give a fuck if I was down in that dog kennel, know what I mean, Beech is my home, I’ve never been over there. I’ve always been in Beech, the three times I’ve been in here, fuck Cedar, they can shove their paperwork [positive/adverse reports] up their hole, I’ll just wipe my arse with it. (Paddy, Beech resident)

It was rare that altercations would occur solely based on the house that the young men were held in, however as is evident in the interviews a stigma existed all the same. While Maycock (2018) suggests that the theory of hegemonic masculinities is outdated – partly due to its reliance on characteristics of homophobia and hierarchy – what is particularly evident from both Dermy’s and Paddy’s quotes is that the perspective held by the young men in Beech towards the young men in Cedar were influenced by homophobia. The young men describe Cedar residents as “queer” and imply other homophobic inferences in relation to their behaviour. Homophobia is crucial to the protection of hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel, 2005; 2008), Connell (1987; 1995) argues that being ‘gay’ becomes the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity and can result in the subordination and stigmatisation of any masculinities which do not conform to the hegemonic ideal. Research within the prison context suggests that within the prison setting homosexuality can be perceived as a form of weakness, to the extent that prisoners may hide their sexual preferences from other prisoners to avoid becoming victimized (see De Viggiani, 2012; Hefner, 2018). Indeed, 100 percent of young men in Hydebank identified as straight in the CJINI (2016b) survey.

While some contemporary theories criticise the theory of hegemonic masculinities because it includes outdated characteristics such as homophobia, it is evident that within a patriarchal society such as NI – whose political discourse

surrounding gay marriage²¹, abortion and sex work laws are defined by religiosity (see Bloomer and O’Dowd, 2014) – the theory is still applicable as homophobia is still prevalent in young men and expressions of masculinity within NI. From a profeminist position the connection between homophobia and hegemonic expressions of masculinity is based on the assumption of heterosexual supremacy. According to Connell (1987; 1995), socially – and structurally – hegemonic masculinities are dominant because they have the power to impose their belief system on others. In relation to Hydebank, the cultural assumption that those who do not conform to the hegemonic ideal of masculinity within the prisoner society are ‘gay’ or ‘feminine’ in some way and therefore valid targets for abuse, victimisation or subordination is damaging to men, women and the LGBT community as a whole (NOMAS, 2018).

As has been identified above, the separation of the young men to two separate houses on the basis of their level of enhancement contributed to the identification and subsequent stigmatisation of those young men who were more compliant. However, at a deeper level, the institutional design of Hydebank – utilising only two houses to imprison the young men – alongside the PREPS, also acted as a filter, moving the least compliant and drug using young men to the lowest levels of enhancement in Beech. This arrangement had implications in terms of the inter-prisoner power relationships (discussed in more detail in section 6.4), creating a ‘power vacuum’. During the fieldwork period a relatively large proportion of the young prisoners from the ‘Bower’ estate were held on the lower landings in Beech House. Reflecting Jacob’s (1977) findings regarding the importation of street based Chicago gangs into the prison setting, power and hierarchies of dominance within Hydebank were largely structured around the area the young men came from in NI. Upon entering the prison, the author was made aware that there had been a shift in control of the informal market from a group of young men from the ‘Burl’ area of Belfast – who were in the process of being released or moved to other prisons due to their age – to another group who were rising to power from the ‘Bower’ estate, who referred to themselves as the ‘Bower Hoods’. This shift in power was described by one of the members of the outgoing ‘Burl’ gang:

²¹ However, some polls suggest that a majority of the NI population now support gay marriage (see Young, 2016).

It was the Burl that dominated the place, there was only about five or six of us, but it was the five or six of us could of bate [beat-up] every one of them [rest of the prisoners], you know there was nobody in the whole jail who could of touched any of us. So what us five or six said went and then slowly but surely it started becoming all Bower, but still us ones were top of the chain you know. Then it eventually got where all Burl ones moved to Maghaberry and it was just me and the Bower ones... slowly but surely I just got myself away from it... they [Bower Hoods] used to be 18/19 [years of age] and now they are all 20/21, they've naturally grew into it. (Brendy)

There were a significant number of young men from the Bower area in Hydebank during the fieldwork period²². At a surface level, it appears natural that the young men from the 'Bower' estate would stick together as there is "near universal acceptance of area-based solidarities within prison" (Phillips, 2008: 323). Furthermore, while PREPS serves to individualise prisoners and dilute the sense of collectiveness (Phillips, 2008; Crewe, 2009), individualising prisoners is difficult to achieve if a group of individuals possess strong bonds prior to entering the institution²³. However, exploring the gendered power relationship between the young men and the institution at a deeper level, it was evident that the nature of the regime and institutional design of the prison were directly influencing the power dynamic within the prisoner group. The institutional design of Hydebank and PREPS facilitated the 'Bower Hoods' rise to dominance over the informal market and subsequently over the wider group of young men. As discussed, young men who were on the same landing or in the same house as their peers from the community find it difficult to progress to the higher landings and more enhanced regime. Therefore, by utilising only two houses, Hydebank created a 'power vacuum' by

²² Picking up on the prominence of the gang during the observation period I asked one of the more dominant members how many of the gang were in Hydebank at the time, he responded "there's 12 of us at the minute". During that week there were around 86 young men in Hydebank, which meant the group equated to around 14 per cent of the prison population in Hydebank at the time. This is a significant amount of young men to be from one area in the jurisdictions only prison for young adult male offenders. In a later interview I asked the same Bower Hoods member what it was like the first time he came to Hydebank, he stated: "Easy, oh aye it was sweet... all the lads was on it [landing], people who I knew from outside. All my mates and all" (Dermey).

²³ Indeed, many of the young men spoke of the difficulties of pursuing positive behaviour whilst on the same landing as friends from the outside: "If your mates are in, they know what way you get on outside you're gonna have to get on in the same way in here. [That is gonna make it hard to turn over a new leaf] Especially if your mate is on the landing with you, know what I mean, they don't like that, they think you are ball-licking the screws" (Mick).

filtering the least compliant prisoners to the bottom of the system and housing them on the same landings as their friends, and at times co-accused, in Beech. Indeed, these issues were largely recognised by the staff:

[Do you think there could be better ways of tackling those gang problems?] It's whenever you have limited space and you're putting (or) squeezing guys in the same landing. Like for example, if you go to Beech 2, Beech 2 is almost exclusively guys from Bower. You know that's unhealthy because then they obviously form those bonds, the same bonds that they have from the outside, and then they become like a gang. So if they put the squeeze on somebody else in here, then it's just like outside in that respect *[Is it possible to try and split them up?]* I think it is. But there has to be will to do it and the problem is because of the way the centres made up. It's a progressive system so if you come in and go to a committal landing and then you move to a house it's almost certainly going to be Beech because that's the standard [enhancement] house and then whenever you progress you go to the enhanced house which is Cedar, so because it is enhanced guys are happy to stay standard because they have got their TV and they can stay with their friends and they feel secure as opposed to taking on the challenge and moving forward. (Prison Officer B)

They [the young men] would all be mates outside, well the majority of them would be and they will probably be co-accused as well so they probably do the crime at the same time and come in for the same thing and you are not meant to go onto the same landing with your co-accused, but I have seen it. (Prison Support Staff A)

Exploring the gendered power relationship between the institution and the young men, and referring again to the PREPS system, some of the young men spoke about being monitored in relation to their behaviour and of the necessity of remaining focused and self-controlled in the aim of progressing through the system. However, at times this created feelings of vulnerability. They could at any stage be dropped onto a lower regime, which could result in reduction of visits, disrupt chances of early release or lose outside work and home leaves. To them their prisoner status was vulnerable as was their reputation to the institution (other sources of vulnerability are discussed in Chapter 8). Butler and Maruna (2012) found that some prisoners felt there was an imbalance in the implementation of the PREPS in NI prisons. They found disparity in the length of time it took to progress upwards through the system compared to the speed with which the levels of enhancement were removed (Butler and Maruna, 2012), thus, enhancing feelings of vulnerability and fear of immediate punitive repercussions for non-compliance.

6.2.2 Institutional contribution to feelings of vulnerability

It was evident during the observations and interviews that the invasive power of the institution created continuous feelings of vulnerability for the young men in Hydebank. Four principal sources of vulnerability borne out of the gendered relationship between the institution and young men were: the food, cleanliness, mice and the use of ‘firewatch’. These are discussed in the remainder of this section. The prison had taken some measures to address the food concerns: Hydebank had worked with dieticians from a local trust to ensure that all prisoners had five portions of fruit and vegetables daily; the young men were provided with hot lunch and dinner options every day; and the CJINI (2016b) inspectors reported that the standard of the food had improved since the last inspection. However, sentiments expressed by young men in the CJINI (2016b) survey did not reflect this with only 14 percent saying the food was either ‘good’ or ‘very good’. The standard of food was a common complaint throughout the observation and in interviews with the young men for this study:

[What about the food and stuff in here?] Shite, apparently it is healthy food, but the chicken isn’t even chicken, know what I mean. It isn’t food, it isn’t proper stuff. The Cabin is where you get proper stuff. The chicken up here isn’t chicken like, even the beef burgers, it isn’t beef. The chips are near enough hard, breakfast is probably the best meal you get in here, cereal. (Adam)

The food is, I love the kitchen workers like, I love the kitchen staff, but the food is fucking rotten, not all the time now, but the majority of time. It is all precooked like, it is all precooked and kept on a fucking hotplate, like that’s not good. That’s not healthy. *[And how long would it be kept on hotplates for?]* From that morning, it’s that bad that we’ve said to them to stop sending us up food, we’ve requested for them to send us up raw stuff so we can cook it ourselves [C4 and C5 have cooking facilities], that’s how bad it is *[And do they do that?]* Aye, they do that for us because we have the cooker and we are able to (Aaron)

As well as the standard of the food, the young men also frequently complained about the cleanliness. As discussed in Chapter 3, poor conditions in prisons can impose feelings of powerlessness and loss of autonomy (Sykes, 1958). Sloan (2016) argues that prisoners’ increased awareness of cleanliness highlights the need for control over one’s environment. Thus, poor conditions in prison reaffirm the power of the institution, emphasise the repeated use of prison space and its lack of individuality

(Sloan, 2016). For the young men in Hydebank this degradation was distinctly felt and the conditions of the prison were commonly mentioned amongst them, subsequently becoming one of the interview questions:

[What would you say about the condition of Hydebank?] Stinking, shit hole, it needs knocked down and built again or just knocked down and left like that... see when you move cells, some of the rooms you go into are fucking bang out of order and then even the cells that people live in now, people is like actually living in it and it is fucking rough. (Martin)

It's leaping [dirty], our ablutions... there's three toilets, three showers, one of them you don't even want to open the door like, it's fucked, the toilet is broke, it stinks, the water comes flying out of the back of the toilet... so that door stays closed... there is damp all around the ceilings the doors are actually swollen with the fucking damp, so you can't really close them. You have to slam them and you have to stick the shoulder into them to get out, you can see the damp everywhere. Fucking anytime you get a shower in that other one the floor floods... so every time you go to the toilet you are getting fucking soaking. You're walking in and out of the fucking Lagan [a river in Belfast] and it fucking annoys the shit out of me. (Aaron)

I have been down there [the block/solitary confinement] for adjudication a couple of times, very bad cells... it is the dirtiest place going I swear... Everything about it man, beds, cells, the whole landing, the whole block, dirtiest place going... *[What would you say about the conditions elsewhere?]* Oh dear god, I am on B4 man and it is the dirtiest landing I have been on in this jail and that is 100% true... dirty man, pure dirty, cells destroyed, ruined man, all the auld names and graffiti everywhere man, rats up and down the place, dirty place man. (Henry)

A clear product of the standard of cleanliness in the institution was the presence of mice in the prison²⁴, this was again a regular complaint. The young men spoke of mice coming into their rooms at night, eating through wrappers of their food and other regular interactions with them. The encounters seemed to occur frequently, particularly in Beech:

Beech, fucking disgusting. There's mice everywhere, I mean everywhere. I caught one in my room and everything. At night you can see them running about the place, you're walking about and you're getting your breakfast and they are scattering about and all, disgusting. It's not liveable whatsoever. It's not... there's mouse traps all about the place, you're trying to catch them all the time, they keep coming fucking back. Either way, they are fucking everywhere. I mean everywhere. (Clinton)

It was recognised by most of the young men that there was a lack of resources within the prison and there was a general consensus (that was shared by many of the staff) that a lot of effort was being put into the 'shell' of the prison such as the gardens, the Cabin, water features and so on, the things that the governor showed outsiders upon their visits. This was seen as being to the detriment of the 'inside' of the prison, the cells, association rooms and other facilities on the landing, seemingly making

24 A regular complaint from the young men was the presence of mice in Hydebank. An extract from July's field notes supports their claims: "when we got back to the cleaner's office some of the young men said they saw a mouse. They said it had run under the table and into where all the cleaning products were kept. It was very funny, all the young men instantaneously jumped on top of tables and chairs and were screaming and shouting. Upon seeing the young men screaming and jumping my instant reaction was to jump on top of the nearest chair in the office. Fintan evidently was not scared of mice, he was laughing at us and began looking amongst the varying cleaning products for the mouse. He was pulling out bottle after bottle to no avail. Behind all the bottles, there was a pipe lying on the ground not attached to anything, Fintan said "I bet ya it's in that". At this point, myself and the other young men had got down from our safe spots and were crowded around the pipe at a reasonable distance away. He moved it with his foot and nothing came out. Upon encouragement, he then picked it up to look inside it and shouted "aw fuck it's in there" at the same time flicked the pipe towards where myself and the other young men were standing. A mouse came flying out of the top of the pipe, landed in front of us and scurried through us and under a filing cabinet. Again every single one of us jumped up onto chairs and tables screaming as the mouse disappeared".

the institution appear at a surface level aesthetically pleasing, for the governors to show their visitors, to the detriment of facilities for the young men. Another outcome of the lack of resources was a shortage of staff. The IMB (2017) highlight that the level of staff absences within Hydebank was consistently high, on average it was around 11 percent from the year between May 2016 – April 2017, reaching 14 percent during July 2016. The IMB directly link the number of lockdowns ('firewatch') the young men were subjected to, to these staff shortages. The IMB also mentions that landing staff may be called off landings to respond to incidents and/or to 'cover' for colleagues (IMB, 2017). The impact of staff shortages was largely felt by the young men who mentioned delays going down to visits and/or not having enough time to prepare for them. They also regularly complained about the large amount of time they spent on 'firewatch'. In the evening times the young men would quite often be subjected to 'firewatch', locked in their cells from dinner time until the next morning, only allowed out of their cells in the case of a fire:

One of the main things that came out of it [the Start 360 prison survey] (was) that there was too many firewatches. Students were constantly locked for nothing because they were short staffed. (Prison Support Staff A)

"We have no staff", well if you have no staff why is it open? It should be closed [*How often would you say you are on firewatch?*] Out of 7 days, 5 days a week. (Paddy)

The increased use of 'firewatch' within the institution served as a continuous reminder of the dominance of the prison over the young men. Through the implementation of the new regime in Hydebank the young men were supposed to be released for association time every night, however as identified in the quotes this was often not the case. The unpredictability of 'firewatch' further reinforced the deprivation of liberty, with the young men often not finding out that they would be on 'firewatch' until that evening. The IMB (2017) identifies the unpredictability of the use 'firewatch' was having a negative impact on prisoners. In April 2016 "three young men climbed onto the roof of the female reception area in a protest over continuing lockdowns" (IMB, 2017: 7). The IMB (2017) also note the negative impact that these significant periods of lockdown were having on prisoners. In addition to the pains associated with isolation in prison (see Sykes, 1958), during periods of 'firewatch' the young men were unable to speak to Samaritans (IMB, 2017) and 'firewatch' "hampered the provision of, and access to, healthcare" (CJINI,

2016b: 39). The poor conditions, food and the overuse of ‘firewatch’ all served to reiterate the young men’s subordinate position within the institution. With every element of the young men’s life being restricted and monitored feelings of powerless and challenges to their masculinity in terms of control and loss of autonomy were common. In summary, this section has explored the gendered power relationship between the young men and the institution. The next section explores the relationship between the young men and the prison staff.

6.3 Young men and prison staff power

While it has been evidenced that the young men in Hydebank felt the power of the institution, it is also important to explore the relationship between the prison staff and prisoners (Sparks et al., 1996). The modern prison officer is crucial in to the operation and administration of a prison (Arnold, 2016) and is responsible for security, service, supervision and policing (Scott, 2006). Prison officers have a range of powers available and the differing powers available may be more or less beneficial in attempts to maintain control and order (Hepburn, 1985). The overuse of power can generate resistance and undermine legitimacy (Liebling and Price, 2001). As a result, Scott (2006) argues that while prison officers have a degree of legal and coercive power, they tend to reject using these powers in full. Instead, prison officers under-use power, exercising it in a more informal manner to create a peaceful and safe environment (Scott, 2006). Liebling and Price (2001) argue that the best prison officers utilise informal strategies, such as the use of discretion, to maintain control and order within the prison setting. Furthermore, Crewe (2009) argues that historically prison officers may have been authoritarian and abusive of power and prisoners subjected to unaccountable callousness. However, he argues the same cannot be said for the majority of modern prison officers (Crewe, 2009).

In relation to Hydebank, from observations of the regime, it appeared that the relationship between the young men and the prison officers was reasonably good on the whole. This was confirmed by the CJINI (2016b: 32) inspection which suggested that interactions between prisoners and staff were “consistently positive and, in a few cases, outstanding”. Although, the relationship between staff and prisoners appeared good, some of the young men expressed distaste for staff:

The staff are, the biggest half of them is all sly bastards to tell the truth to you, you get the odd auld one that is alright but the makings of them they are all hidden [untrustworthy, sleeked] cunts like. (Henry)

[What would you say about the staff then?] They are all fucking eejits, every single one of them. They are all screw cunts... they treat us like dogs. (Paddy)

However, this hostility was not felt by all of the young men with many, particularly on the more enhanced landings, recognising the difficult position of staff. These young men believed that staff were just doing their job and got on reasonably well with them:

The staff are alright, I like the staff. (Johnny)

[How would you say the staff treat young people in Hydebanks?] Well they treat me sweet, they do... I have been here so long I can't help but get to know them and get along with them, so aye they treat me sweet. (Martin)

For most part, the general consensus was that it was the individual character of the staff member that defined the relationship. As with most aspects of life, some staff were nice, some were not:

The screws, some of them are 100% and you can tell who wants you to do well and stuff. Like some of them will say when you're sick in your cell, "take a wee hour or two there for a wee kip and I'll let you out here and see how you feel and I'll bring you down to the nurse". But then some of them will be like, "fucking get up, get ready, you're going down to work" and you're like can I get a shower and they're like "no you're not getting a fucking shower you're going down to fucking work" and they're talking down to you and you're just like you're a fucking prick, I'd love to hit him you know. (Brendy)

Obviously there's a few that are cunts like, that's just like anywhere you go... you will get some staff that will treat people sweet and then some staff that will treat some people like complete fucking wankers. (Clinton)

Crewe (2009) suggests that in the UK there has been a shift in power away from prison officers at ground level to a more senior managerial approach. In the past prison staff at ground level may have held the sway of power in prisons, however there has been a shift in power towards the focus of meeting central targets and implementing modern individualised incentivised regimes (Crewe, 2009). The principal focus of the regime in Hydebanks was on the implementation of the PREPS and 'College' systems (see CJINI, 2016b; IMB, 2017). The CJINI (2016b: 12)

suggested that the PREPS was “well managed and adjudications conducted fairly” and that it was being successfully utilised to strategically manage young men’s behaviour.

It was evident through observations of the regime and discussions with staff and young men, that prison officers had significant discretionary power in relation to the PREPS system. While the young men had the potential to progress onto the enhancement regime through ‘good behaviour’ or compliance with the prisons’ code of conduct the landing staff were crucial to this as they could hand out adverse reports which could reduce the enhancement level. Additionally, the staff could prevent the young men progressing onto the more enhanced landings. Therefore, daily interactions between young men and staff, particularly on the landings, were characterised by manipulative forms of control and constant behavioural consideration. The staff possessed the power to use discretion in regards to the behaviour of the young men. They were the principal writers of ‘adverse reports’ which resulted in a drop in regime level or being ‘backhoused’ and could propose drugs tests for individuals. They were also largely involved in deciding who was ‘behaving well’ enough to progress on to more enhanced landings. This power was resented by the young men and they often felt a lack of respect in this regard, particularly from the male staff:

Them keys, they think them keys is a licence for them to treat us like shit, them keys go to their heads so they do, everybody will tell you the same like, once they get them keys in their hands they know they can lock you up anytime they fucking want, that’s them power tripping, that is all they care about. They must be actually proper fucking weak minded for that to happen to them like, for a set of keys to take over their fucking personality. (Aaron)

You get the screws that can be dead on and you get the ones that jump on authority because they have the keys they think they are better than you and throw their nose up, stuff like that. I don’t like that, but you have to put up with it like, it’s jail... the night guards, they are wankers, because they know you are behind the door so there is nothing you can do so a lot of them will do your head in, wind you up, turn your light on and all when you are trying to sleep. You just get all the ballbags of the day like and they will do it because they know he can’t do nothing he’s not going to be able to get me... and if I say something back then I get adversed or charged you know what I mean, it is stupid that’s they’re drunk on their power. (Phillip)

The female staff are more sounder so they are, you know they are more relaxed and they would sit and have a conversation with you all day long. But with the men they just wanna be in control you know what I mean they wanna be able to tell you what to do, you know they are happy to put you behind your door... they like the power, they like being in control. (Thomas)

Although decisions regarding levels of enhancement were not made by ground level officers alone and could be influenced by both senior officers and governors, the ground level staff had a great deal of influence. Their use of discretion could strongly impact young men's experiences, letting some things go unpunished for certain individuals who they knew were normally good and potentially just having a bad day and being more punitive and less tolerant for others, appearing to specifically target some young men at times. Butler and Maruna (2012) had similar findings in relation to the implementation of PREPS across the NI prison establishments, identifying that prisoners felt there was an unjustified use of adverse reports and "a perceived inconsistency amongst staff in their use" (Butler and Maruna, 2012: 8). The complaint of inconsistency found in Butler and Maruna's (2012) study was shared by the young men in Hydebank:

I've been on the landing the longest out of all of us right and fucking they haven't moved me upstairs to C3... there's people moving over from Beech who haven't even been here a week or two and then they are up the stairs [*Do you think the staff treat you fairly then?*] No fuck, fairly, my balls. They make you think that... see half of the one's that get moved upstairs they are all the fucking junkies in here too, do you know what I mean, that is meant to be an enhanced landing and they are just giving them a chance before me. But Mr. [staff name removed for confidentiality] doesn't like me, and do you know what I mean I don't like him, to be honest I hate him, he's just been a dick with me... it's not right. (Adam)

It was generally perceived by the young men that religious discrimination in the implementation of PREPS was not an issue. However, in research examining the area in more detail, Butler and Maruna (2012) found that Catholics, in all of the prison establishments in NI, were disciplined more frequently than other prisoners. Furthermore, they found that proportionally, Catholics had the highest levels of adjudications within the prisons and were most likely to be on 'Basic' or 'Standard' regimes (Butler and Maruna, 2012). Indeed, the CJINI (2016b) report into Hydebank also highlighted that compared to other prisoners, systemically outcomes for

Catholic prisoners were worse and they were less likely to feel their religious beliefs were respected. The report highlights that 83 percent of the prison staff within the male residential areas of the prison were Protestant, compared to the 62 percent Catholic prison population (CJINI, 2016b). Some prisoners who participated in Butler and Maruna's (2012) study argued that Protestant prison staff could be more familiar and comfortable around Protestant prisoners. They felt that they may feel more comfortable interacting with individuals from similar backgrounds or with similar political views. Indeed, some Protestant prisoners who participated in Butler and Maruna's (2012) study shared the point of view that Catholic prisoners were discriminated against by the NIPS. Although some Protestant prisoners felt that Catholics were treated more leniently due to staff sensitivities about being perceived as sectarian (Butler and Maruna, 2012). Whilst the young men in Hydebank did not feel they were being discriminated against on a religious basis, they spoke of 'favouritism':

There are a lot of people who don't like how it is run in here, there is a lot of favouritism. See favouritism it is a big thing; I mean it is a big thing. Like see whatever way you treat an officer in here and you are good with them you have a good laugh with them and all and you are not just an auld blunt fucker... most of them will give you that back and have a good laugh with you, a bit of banter and all. So they like you then, so then you are their favourite, so then it is all favouritism. See if they don't like you they will be out, see anything stupid, your room is dirty or anything like that – "adverse (report) kid, off the landing, get him back to Beech", but then they have probably done something on that officer so if they have a reason they will put pen to paper, they will get you back for it. (Jordan)

If they don't like you they'll get you dropped to basic or else outside charges that's the way they all are know what I mean, all fucking eejits [*Is it easy for them to do that?*] Easy? It's like that there [clicks fingers] click of the fingers they can do that. (Dermy)

This use of discretion by prison staff correlates with Sykes' (1958) study where the staff, at times, tolerated minor infringements for general compliance. Crewe (2009) argues that schemes such as the PREPS (and IEPS) have introduced a new format of punishment for staff to utilise, where in the past the ground level staff may have utilised physical brutality, punishment now operates within the realms of bureaucracy through the discretionary implementation of policy and procedure. These discrepancies discussed by the young men in the interviews may be difficult

to prove. However, some young men noted how they could use the system to their own advantage, this became known as ‘playing the game’:

[If you knew anyone coming in here now what advice would you give them?] Keep the head down is one of the main things, see whatever the officers want you to do, it’s just “yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir”, know what I mean, just take it on the chin because sure look where I am. Fair play, like see if you are in the right and you know they are in the wrong and they are still arguing with you and you know they are just lying to your face... see before they put pen to paper I have went to an SO or a governor and said I have had a problem with this and explained the situation, know what I mean, and the governor is like well I can see your point. So if I ever got an adverse or anything like that can affect me in here, know what I mean, that can get you taken of certain landings, so I have went ahead and went to the people they are going to go to and I have went there before they did and just explained to them. It has only happened a couple of times, but there is a couple of them in here you need to watch what you say to them, because if they don’t like you they are out to get you like. (Jordan)

Them wee lads have the mentality, that they are here to beat the system, but they are never going to beat the system *[What do you mean beat the system, in what sense?]* Like do everything they can do without the screws knowing, getting away with shit, I have told them don’t try and beat the system, play the system and you get it a lot easier... Get yourself over to Cedar... C5 that’s the place to be, C5 you can do whatever the fuck you want, you can go to bed whenever you want you can get up and make your own dinner at whatever time you want, don’t have to ask to go to the toilet if you haven’t got a toilet in your cell you can actually lock your toilet door. See on the landing [any other landing bar C5] if you’re sitting taking a shite and the screw is opening the flap looking at you and you are going what the fuck do you want I’m trying to wipe my hole. (Mick)

[Would you say they treat everyone the same?] No... they pick and choose, if you fuck about you are going to get tortured, if you don’t fuck about you are sweet, if you be cheeky you will get nothing either... you have to play the game, certain staff you just have to know how to work, how to get along with them, what not to do, what to do when they are there, but it is hard work trying to keep all that in your head about certain staff. (Martin)

This concept of ‘playing the game’ was how the young men referred to ‘playing’ the system. They conformed, or at least portrayed that they conformed, to the rules of the prison to benefit from enhancements. They knew the ground level staff were key to the PREPS system so they claimed to ‘play them’, “yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir” (Jordan). Knowing “how to work, how to get along with them, what not to do,

what to do when they are there”, this brought about difficulties in “trying to keep all that in your head about certain staff” (Martin), but it was worth it when they got the enhancements. Being enhanced not only brought certain privileges but also provided young men with foundations for appeals, early releases, home leaves and outside work. This made being on the enhanced regime appealing to many of the young men.

Increased discretion provides the appearance that young men to an extent govern themselves. This is beneficial to staff and prisoners as the staff have less incidents to deal with and less adverse reports to fill out, appearing at a surface level that they have well run landings and subsequently allowing the young men to progress through the PREPS system. Juxtaposed to this, the increased use of discretion can also have a negative impact. Exploring the gendered relationship between staff and young men at a deeper level, as identified in Chapter 5, aggressive and violent masculinities were common within Hydebank, with young men discussing regular incidents of violence. However, in the three-year period from the CJINI (2013) inspection and the CJINI (2016b) inspection, there was a 70 percent reduction in recorded violence within the institution. This apparent discrepancy in recorded levels of violence was recognised by CJINI (2016b). The report identified that indicators on violence were not accurate or being monitored sufficiently and “that incidents of bullying were not being recorded” (CJINI, 2016b: 23). This discrepancy between the high levels of violence within the institution – discussed by the young men – and reduced recorded levels of violence, suggests that certain aspects of imprisonment were being pushed further underground or not being reported.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the young men describe fighting in cells or other blind spots so as not to upset their informal economy. However, discreet fighting could also be linked to the regime and the individualisation of young men. Most of the young men were aware of the PREPS and were conscious about losing privileges so chose to fight in private. Indeed, this is supported by the CJINI (2016b: 12) report which highlighted there had been an increase in bullying and “young men reported that they felt more unsafe than at the last inspection”, however “recorded levels of violence were not excessive”. Increased bullying and fear of violence, but lower levels of recorded violent incidents suggest there is a “dark figure” (Biderman and Reiss, 1967: 1) of unrecorded incidents within the institution. Examining this trend, it appears that the young men co-operated in their own incarceration,

effectively governing themselves within the confines of the prison. They fought in private so as not to attract the attention of staff, allowing the young men to operate the informal market, be involved in violence and intimidation, and also progress through the PREPS. This was reiterated by the CJINI (2016b: 23) inspection which stated “data on indicators of violence were not accurate enough and the secure College was not monitoring or analysing them sufficiently”. Some members of staff did directly blame the new regime for this:

[Do you think the young men buy into the new regime?] If it suits them, it suits them when it suits them, because it means they get out of their cells longer, less time and more free movement. They will go along with it because it suits them, but then they [the institution] also have the trade-off for the level of disrespect from the students/prisoners/patients to staff has escalated, the level of assaults has increased, there is more free movements, prisoner on prisoner assaults have increased, you heard there quite recently as well that there is a possibility that a female has got pregnant by another male prisoner was in the papers²⁵ all due to free movement you know so it has its trade-offs... *[Do you feel safe?]* No, I feel unsafe, I do. You get to know them, you get to know situations where you feel that I am okay here you know, but if I had an altercation with a prisoner the day before I wouldn't dream about walking down a landing on my own. But there is not enough prison staff on the ground either... The drugs suite here is for the prisoners, but it is not used to its full potential, staff searches here are, I've been searched here two days ago, that was the first in about 6 months *[I have never been searched]* ... I don't know who it was, but I was informed that a member of staff was caught... I was told the going rate was £500 a go to bring drugs in. (Prison Support Staff B)

As is evident from the quote above, some of the staff believed that the new regime was directly responsible for increases in levels of drugs and violence. Indeed, Butler (2017) identifies there has been an overall increase in prisoner on prisoner and prisoner on staff violence within NI prisons since 2009/10. She suggests that this, in part, could be attributed to the new regimes, however argues that international research suggests that in periods of transition prisons may underperform for a period while adapting to the new changes (Butler, 2017). Furthermore, some of the staff

25 The article referred to: McAleese, D. (2016) 'Murder accused Henderson pregnant after affair in jail' *Belfast Telegraph*. Date Accessed: [24/1/18]. Available online: <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/murder-accused-henderson-pregnant-after-affair-in-jail-34727558.html>

believed that the introduction of the ‘College’ system was a money saving exercise, as is discussed below:

[What way do you view the College system?] I think probably cynically like most of us to be honest... For me it’s a money saving exercise, because Colleges don’t need prison officers. They need obviously a different range [of staff]. But the same service is being provided now as it was 20 years ago. Everything that is in place now it was maybe done by different people, but the likes of Belfast Met [BMC] (are) doing most of the workshops now, that used to be staff who had City and Guilds. And Belfast Met I think is delivering less qualifications now than the staff delivered. And a lot of them aren’t as well trained and it’s the same thing. And see the likes of Adept and Opportunity Youth Staff used to do all that too until the cut backs, “[prison officers] we don’t need him so we’ll get rid of them, sure they cost too much, but we will employ those guys because they are on two thirds the money or half the money”. So it’s financial saving, that’s my perspective. I think the guys [the young men] for the most part realise that, most of them are switched on enough to see, sure we’re still getting woken up in the morning. We still go to work or education and we still come back and we get locked at night until we get our tea. (Prison Officer B)

As is evident from Prison Officer B’s quote, some of the prison staff believed the aim of the new regime was “financial saving”. Indeed, the NIPS budget fell by 15 percent between 2013- 2015 and a further 8 percent in the financial year 2015-16. A large part of the reduction in budget was attributed to the voluntary exit scheme introduced within the NIPS which was aimed at ensuring a more representative service (NIPS, 2017a). Through the voluntary exit scheme 575 prison officers and 69 prison support staff left the prison service between 2012-16 (Smyth, 2016). Furthermore, the IMB (2017) noted that the budget cuts had resulted in the reduction in the level of staff within Hydebank. It identified that staff reduction had been so significant that were previously Hydebank had two prison officers on each landing this had been reduced to one (IMB, 2017). It is evident from these statistics that the financial saving within the prison service from 2012-16 has resulted in a significant reduction in the level of staff within Hydebank. However, a number of other factors should be considered in relation to this: there was also a reduction in the number of young men held within the institution (CJINI, 2016b); and the introduction of the ‘College’ system was also a response to the severe criticisms – including those regarding the deaths in custody which predated this research (discussed in Chapter 8) – made of the institution in the PRT (2011) and CJINI (2013) reports.

From discussions with the young men throughout the observational period it was evident that some of the young men shared the belief that the new regime had been implemented as due to “financial saving” (Prison Officer B). However, although they were mostly cynical of the regime, they recognised the benefits it brought to them as residents within the institution:

As you know we are now ‘Hydebank Wood College’ fuck so we’re actually referred to as ‘students’ now by *certain* members of the faculty, let’s just say that. Us boys we believe it’s to make the governor look good. (Gary)

[What’s been different about this time compared to the last times?] You’re out more, like you’re down in education and all more so you are, like they don’t really want you stuck on the landing or anything anymore, they want you out so they do... [In the previous regime] You were locked on the landing just... you were locked up, you got out for your breakfast, you got out for your lunch, you got your dinner and then maybe asso, know what I mean that was it. (Dee)

100 times better, I was here when Hydebank wasn’t a College, when it was a YOC, and the place was like a prison camp. It genuinely was diabolical, as in like members of staff had to escort you no matter where you went. I had done four and a half months, five months without actually being outside. Six months on the same landing, things just weren’t done right. The need to lock people up and nearly punish them was far higher for staff, their mentality was that way and I think it was because the people above the leadership that’s kind of what they believed as well, that you know guys are here to be punished and you know, basically they are scum bags or whatever. (Gerard)

Now you’ve got all these new ones [staff members]... I’ve been in this jail longer than some of these boys have even had a job know what I mean and they just walk around with the bravado that because they have a set of keys they can tell you what to do... see whenever you are my age you just laugh and let them beat on, play the game that’s just the way it is... some of the new ones just walk around and they just do your head in the way they walk around and the way they carry themselves, know what I mean, fuck sake you are in a young offenders centre, know what I mean, I’m not gonna call it a College because at the end of the day what College locks you behind a door. Locks you behind a fucking grille, know what I mean, that’s just the way it is. I’m an inmate, I am not a student. (Johnny)

This section, examining the power relationships between the young men and prison staff within Hydebank, has provided an insight into the implementation of

the new PREPS and ‘College’ systems at ground level within the institution. The nature of the use of discretion has been discussed within Hydebank with some of the young men feeling that it can lead to staff “favouritism” (Jordan). However, the young men also recognised that through the introduction of the PREPS it is possible to “play the game” (Martin) and benefit from the various enhancements available within the prison. This section has also highlighted the perception that some of the staff and young men hold, that the introduction of the new regime was a form of “financial saving” (Prison Officer B). Through reviewing relevant statistics, it has been evidenced that the reduction in budget and staff levels within the institution has coincided with the introduction of the new regime. However, it is worth considering that there has also been an overall reduction in the number of the young men held within the prison (IMB, 2017) and BMC has partnered with the institution to deliver the majority of the educational and vocational classes within the prison.

Thus far, this chapter has explored the gendered power relationships between both the institution and staff and the young men in Hydebank. The final section explores the inter-prisoner gendered power relationships amongst the prisoner society.

6.4 Inter-prisoner power

Sim (1994) argues that there exists a gendered hierarchical structure amongst the prisoner group within men’s prisons. He argues that the hierarchy is based upon power, dominance and propensity to engage in violence. The nature of this hierarchy places emphasis and scrutiny on everyday interactions (Sim, 1994). Toch (1998) supports Sim’s (1994) argument and suggests that a culture of violence exists within prison settings which is closely linked to gendered hierarchies. Toch suggests that ‘worthy men’ in prison defend their honour violently when it is affronted. In contrast to this, ‘unworthy men’ ignore challenges and seek help. He argues that, as a result, measures of worth are based around expressions of masculinity and inevitably a gendered hierarchy emerges (Toch, 1998). Within the Hydebank context, as before mentioned, a group who referred to themselves as the ‘Bower Hoods’ reportedly controlled the informal market and exercised a degree of power over other young men within the prison. On a number of occasions during observations, the researcher

witnessed non-members of the group going out of their way to make tea and coffee or roll cigarettes for members of the 'Bower Hoods'. On one occasion while the author was sitting with a group of young men in one of the vocational training areas, one of the non-members of the gang came over and picked up a polystyrene coffee cup from the feet of one of the 'Bower Hoods' – which he had thrown on the floor – and put it in the bin. As he was picking it up he said "let me get that for you John". The researcher was having a conversation with John at the time, John just looked at the researcher and laughed.

On another occasion, the researcher was standing outside the Cabin Café with some of the members of the 'Bower Hoods', they shouted in to the other young men working in the Cabin to bring them out food. A couple of minutes later a selection of bacon butties, wraps, sandwiches and buns were brought out. The Cabin staff, who themselves were all prisoners, appeared reluctant in this process. The researcher never witnessed any of the members paying for these items which effectively meant the staff were putting their jobs at risk. On this occasion, a staff member who was supervising the members of the 'Bower Hoods' outside the Café witnessed the food being brought out and went into the Café and made sure the Bower Hood's accounts were charged for the food. Brendy explained what it meant for those who held power over the inter-prisoner group:

If there's any fights or anything they [whatever gang holds power at the time] will hear about it before it happens... it would be "right these two are slabbering" [threatening each other] and then it's, "do they need to sort it out?" Or "can they just leave it?"... you don't want any attention because there are lots of drugs or whatever flying about, but these two eejits are trying to start fighting each other it's gonna bring even more attention that we don't need... If someone gets something in and other people want some and they say "no" then it would all be took off them... and split it between the rest and then he gets nothing for trying to be greedy you know [*So whenever stuff's coming in everyone knows about it then?*] They [the wider prisoner group] don't know about it until it's there, nobody will ever know where it's coming from, it's a tight ship like, it is a tight ship. Even the young ones and all they wouldn't have a clue like, they just have their money at the ready and then they'll get a little surprise and then it's gone, you know you're out the door. (Brendy)

What we said goes and that was it... it mightn't even be us having to do anything... I haven't had to do anything since the start. Anything I said just went and that was it... literally I just would of went to any of themins, he was slabbering or he owes me money, go fucking get it... it would of got done and then when I seen him I would've fired him a wee back hander and that's it, jobs done... [*Would that be money?*] Probably. Just

whatever's there, they all go wild for the tablets like. They would literally do anything for you for the tablets... anything you want you can get it done, next thing you know the guys battered [beaten up] and away to hospital and you're sitting in your cell, you feel cat [bad, guilty] as fuck like, but it has to be done. I don't have the conscience to do any of it myself. I like getting my hands dirty without having to get blood on them. (Brendy)

It is clear from the interview with Brendy that whoever is the dominant, controlling gang has a lot of say in the informal 'running' of the prison. They are in control of fighting, the informal economy and maintain inter-prisoner power through their own adaptations of manipulation and inducement, "they would literally do anything for you for the tablets" (Brendy). A culture of violence was conspicuous and intertwined with the maintenance of power and control. These discussions regarding control, power and dominance draw parallels to Connell's (1987, 2002) theory of hegemonic masculinities. While some more 'evolved' masculinities theories (Maycock, 2018) may have dispelled the connection between masculinities and hierarchy (see Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012), Connell's theory suggests that within cultural settings there exists a dominant or hegemonic expression of masculinity. The hegemonic expression is fluid and can exist differently in varying social, cultural or historical contexts. However, the hegemonic expression of masculinity always inhabits a position of power over other expressions of masculinity. Subsequently, other expressions of masculinity, such as subordinated or complicit, exist in relation to the dominant expression (Connell, 1987; 2002). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) highlight that the theory of hegemonic masculinities can be utilised to examine gendered power relations on a global sphere or in a specified proximate social space. They suggest that local level examination can be used to understand gendered power relationships between individuals in families, communities or institutions (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In this regard, Michalski (2015) argues that within the cultural prison setting the hegemonic expression of masculinity is often characterised by power, violence and dominance. As a result, men who achieve this expression of masculinity within the prison setting are often situated at the top of the prisoner hierarchy.

The theory of hegemonic masculinities is useful in analysing the gendered power relationship between the young men, the hegemonic expression of masculinity within Hydebark was consistent with the one suggested by Michalski, it was characterised by power, dominance and violence. The presence of this

expression of masculinity within Hydebank contributed to the gendered power hierarchy existing within the institution which was discussed by some of the young men in interviews:

As soon as they do a couple of things they've paid their dues, do you know what I mean, they've earned their whack... Money, phones, drugs, smoke, anything that comes... It all gets equalled out, [then] just goes down and down, all the outsiders, they get taxed top dollar like *[Is it almost like a hierarchy?]* That's exactly what it is... you fall into your spot and you're kept there. (Brendy)

There's always kind of four names... from the ones, twos, threes, and fours [landings], you'll get a name and who is the boy on that landing... there's boys up the stairs, even on the very highest level the fives [C5] that still their dominance around this jail won't be questioned, you know no-one is going to come up and get in their face *[And whenever you say like three or four names do you mean like they're like the hardest ones?]* Yeah, they run the landing. *[And how do you get to be in that position?]* You got to be a good fighter, I mean you know that bits obvious, and I think what the other part of it is, it's kind of like anything, it's like a job you've got to show leadership if you want to go anywhere. If you want to stay on the level you're on... and don't aspire to anything it's kind of like that way in a job, you will remain there *[Is there like an official recognition then?]* Fuck yeah, I mean word goes about. I mean there's always a fight, there's always someone getting something done to them, there's a boy on that landing over there [points to C2]... *[C2?]* Yeah, who was sliced open, like right down his cheek, fucking purely because the boys thought he was a root, you know so fucking that was done by somebody who was like me, he was young he wanted to aspire to run his landing, so to slice somebody, especially if it was a root fuck, that would of took him way, way, way high up. (Gary)

These quotes highlight the power dynamic and hierarchical structures present within the institution. Again, in correlation with theory of hegemonic masculinities, there were dominant individuals on each landing, controlling the informal economy and maintaining power through reputation and violence. The quote from Gary highlights the subordination of certain expressions of masculinity. 'Roots' were young men who were suspected by the others to be in Hydebank for sexual offences. As is identified in Gary's quote they were largely disliked and violent attacks on them

were considered acceptable and in some circumstances celebrated²⁶ (the subordination of ‘roots’ is discussed in greater detail later in this section).

However, it was not only through violence that the young men ascertained dominance. It could also be through their contribution to the informal market, as outlined by Gary:

Up the stairs is run by a fella, but not because he’s the hardest, but because he’s able to bring in the most drugs... I can still sell to my ones on my landing and then go up the stairs and say there’s £20s left there if anybody wants it, I can do that by permission, you can’t just go up and do it you have to ask. But 9 times out of 10 they’re not gonna care as long as they’re making their weekly touch, know what I mean. (Gary)

The young men within Hydebank evidently held disjointed interpretations of power. They would often refer to other young men who “run” (Gary) the jail or landing, suggesting they were in total control of the landing. As discussed in Chapter 5, there evidently was a lack of realisation, or just acknowledgement, of the broader structures of power in place, in particular, the coercive control of the state through their incapacitation. Using the ‘Bower Hoods’ as an example, these young men who were ‘running’ the prison – and supposedly held the most power within the prisoner society – were in most circumstances, the ‘least compliant’ and subsequently were on the most basic regime. As a result, they were given the shortest association periods (if any at all) or were often being held in the ‘block’ or on a ‘red card’²⁷. Through these disjointed interpretations of power, the Bower Hoods are arguably in one instance among the most marginalised and incapacitated individuals within society as a whole²⁸, however within the cultural prison society they felt powerful and dominant amongst their peers. While the theory of hegemonic masculinities may be open to criticism (see Chapter 2), the ability to utilise it in local level analysis

26 Indeed, the death of Samuel Carson (2011) is further evidence of the culture and beliefs regarding sex offenders amongst the prisoner group within Hydebank. Samuel Carson hung himself in Hydebank after he was repeatedly bullied and threatened because of the nature of his offences. The NIPS was criticised by the Prisoner Ombudsman for failing to investigate or address the continued bullying and threatening of Carson (The Prisoner Ombudsman for NI, 2012).

27 The ‘block’ was Hydebank’s form of solitary confinement and being on a ‘red-card’ meant one-to-one supervision around the campus by a member of prison staff.

28 It could be argued that these young men are the most marginalised or incapacitated within society as a whole because they are already imprisoned, but they are further incapacitated within the prison setting by being regularly subjected to one-on-one supervision (through the red-card) or being held in the block/solitary confinement.

(Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) is beneficial here. Young men in prison are generally socially and economically marginalised within the context of wider society, however they can ascertain hegemonic status and feel socially empowered within a smaller cultural environment. Power is situated in terms of interpersonal relations and conferred through the eyes and responses of others and control can be attained in cultural environments through influence and power over other individuals (Sloan, 2016).

Referring specifically to the ‘Bower Hoods’, it was evident that they were feared by the wider group of young men in Hydebank. Their reputation as a gang coming from one of the notoriously roughest estates in Belfast preceded them and supported their behaviour within the prison. They were reportedly the main perpetrators of bullying and drug distribution. The majority of the other young men recognised this²⁹:

It’s not so much bullying of one person it is groups, know what I mean, like in here there is a group of people [Bower Hoods], they are all mates from the outside, you know what I mean, there is loads of them, and if you are not one of themins you can’t have one of them a fair dig. If you are fighting one of them, you are fighting them all. And then see the likes of the ones that they know is not gonna say nothing to them, you see them all picking on them, it’s not right like... You can’t stop it like, you just have to wait until they are gone. Once they are gone they are gone, that’s the only way that it’s gonna stop like. (Ryan)

[Is there a sort of gang mentality?] Oh aye definitely... especially the Bower ones, you know they know each other from the outside and there’s that many of them. You know they just seem to run about in their own wee clique *[Would other young men be intimidated by them?]* I’ve seen it in some people. Aye I have alright *[Bullying?]* Oh aye, they would bully people. I’ve seen them bully people that don’t say nothing, you know, that are just quiet. That’s the only ones they’ll go for because obviously they’ll say nothing so that they can get away with it. (Thomas)

Perhaps surprisingly, given the legacies of ethno-nationalist conflict which affect NI society, religion was largely deemed to not be a contentious issue amongst the young men in Hydebank:

29 The young men were not asked specifically about this group of young men, but quite often they emerged as a topic of conversation.

I'm a Catholic but the majority, nearly all of the people who I have got on with the best in here are Protestant which is just an example of religion is fuck all to me, I have more things to be worried about in life. (Aaron, Catholic)

Nah nothing, I am a prod like and I am in for rioting and my best mate on the landing is a catholic like, I am on a landing with all Catholics and they are all 100% like it means nothing to me like. (Alfred, Protestant)

NI has historically been a divided region along social, political and cultural lines (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). The NI Housing Executive reports that 94 per cent of social housing in Belfast and 90 per cent of social housing in NI as a whole are segregated³⁰ (Morris, 2016). It was widely recognised that a large proportion of the population within Hydebank was Catholic (62 percent), in particular the 'Bower Hoods' (who roughly made up 14 percent of the prison population) were a homogenous gang stemming from a predominantly Catholic Belfast estate. Therefore, similar to Jacobs' (1977) and also Phillips' (2008) research, the gangs of young men in Hydebank stemmed from wider NI communities and were often defined by locality and religion. So while religion was not deemed to be a contentious issue, a small number of those from non-Catholic backgrounds spoke of feelings of marginalisation and at times bullying:

Because a Traveller, like myself, it is kind of like discrimination... they are coming in your room and they'll say like gypsy or whatever, these bad names and they do this to try and hurt you... last night I was in my room and went for a phone call and I left my cell door open and I came back and there was a load of shower gel on my plug and it was like plugged into the wall and they had it turned on so my electric was off³¹. (Mark)

I said I was a Protestant, [they] kind of laughed and you know just dandered away as if to say you know "we'll get him some other time"... then the same night my TV and all was stolen, my tobacco was stolen, all sorts of wee stupid things [*Do you think religion would be a big thing in here?*] To me it seems to be like... that was my problem like, I was getting picked on because of what I was... it's at least 90 per cent Catholics in here... in Beech there's about 95 per cent Catholics³²... I got a hard time for a while... for being a

30 Deemed 'segregated' if over 90% of residents, within each estate, are from a particular background.

31 This act was also known as 'blowing the electric'. It was a regular occurrence in Hydebank and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The institution was aware of incidents of 'blowing the electric' as they had to fix the electric in the young men's cells.

32 As mentioned above, the actual percentage of young men who self-identified as Catholics within the institution was 62 percent (CJINI, 2016b).

Prod. I got a real hard time for it for ages... [*What did they do?*] All sorts, jumped me... wee small things like taking my dinner or lunch or something, threw water all around your room, wrecking your bed and all... I was paranoid like, for a while so I was, you know, I was always looking over my shoulder, couldn't trust nobody, didn't know who to speak to. (Thomas)

As is apparent from the above quotations, bullying was common in Hydebank. Sykes (1958) argues that alongside the deprivations of liberty, the high threat of personal safety within the prison environment is at the core of the pains of imprisonment. There are constant tests to the masculinities of prisoners and experiences such as those discussed in the quotations quite often forced these subordinated and quieter young men into adopting more violent and aggressive expressions of masculinity as a front and prevention method for bullying and to prevent being victimised.

It has been argued that those prisoners who are successfully isolated “are confirmed in their vulnerability” (O'Donnell and Edgar, 1998: 275). As has been evidenced throughout this thesis, there is a clear social subordination of certain expressions of masculinity that are perceived to be weak or inadequate when measured against the dominant expression. Some young men were physically subordinated within the institution. The ‘vulnerable landing’ situated on C2 held those prisoners who were vulnerable for various reasons, including the nature of their crimes. These young men were deemed to be at risk from the wider group and were therefore physically segregated. The young men held on C2 were colloquially referred to by the wider group as the ‘roots’. Although no-one could explain where the label derived from, it was deemed that “roots are rapists” (Adam) or those suspected of being sex-offenders.

As is discussed in Chapter 7 in relation to time, certain sentences and offences associated with them earned young men a certain amount of respect within Hydebank and contributed to the prison hierarchy. In the same vein, certain criminal offences were looked down upon more than others. For example, theft from vulnerable victims, such as the elderly, were scrutinised and viewed more negatively than theft which targeted businesses. Also, property theft, such as burglary, was looked down upon by some but could be justified if all that was targeted in the burglary was a car for the purposes of joyriding. While there were constant attempts by young men to present their offences over others as being legitimate and culturally acceptable, there was a general consensus that the most morally unacceptable crimes

were sexual offences, in particular, sexual offences conducted against children (also see Crewe, 2009). Such offences placed the offenders at the very bottom of the hierarchy in Hydebank:

“Roots they are the worst... Because of what they done” (Adam)

“Don’t like them like. That’s why they are there [C2], they can’t be associated with” (Aaron).

The significance of this in terms of masculinities, was not to simply place sex offenders in some morally unacceptable deviant subculture which the wider group of young men repudiated (Sim, 1994), but it was also a strategy to present a socially accepted expression of masculinity for the wider group (Edgar et al., 2003). Public displays of distaste towards suspected sex offenders through discourse or physical violent acts became a measure of reaffirming young men’s masculinity within the prison. The ‘root’ label could be given to anyone suspected of a sexual offence and therefore placed the individual at risk of physical attack, as was discussed by some of the young men:

They used to let them [the ‘roots’] walk about escorted and it just didn’t work, they got battered [best up] whether there was a screw there or not. (Brendy)

Sliced open, like right down his cheek, fucking purely because the boys thought he was a root. (Gary)

The stigma of the label was felt by the young men on C2 who at times felt friends had turned their back on them because they had been moved to the C2 landing:

Like I’ve got mates out in Beech and I’ve seen a couple of mates there today like through the window and they’re all shouting through “you rapist” “you rapist” you know just getting on like that there because I’m on C2 and like they don’t actually know what the landing is for. It’s for vulnerable people like, you know, they class me as something now because I’m on this landing. (Tony)

It is important to note, that not everyone held on C2 was imprisoned for a sex offence. C2 was utilised to house those individuals who were deemed to be at risk for various reasons. However, suspicions regarding young men’s offences often stemmed from media reporting or other young men in the prison who may be from

the same area. Therefore, it was common for young men to keep a copy of their charge sheet or provide details from their ongoing case to others to prove their offences. In his interview Jordan discussed being accused of a crime he did not commit and having to prove his crime to the wider group of young men:

I got my PE [preliminary enquiry] papers and all, and his [the victim's] statement, and then I said "there you go lads read it". And they read it and they were like right fair enough so that wee dick in here did talk shite about you then. And I said "aye there you go, there is the papers, there is that fella's statement, saying what we done to him". Showed them and all they were like what the fuck everything you said was bang on lad and I said "aye, I told you that". I said "I'm hardly gonna come in here and lie about what I am in for" know what I mean, it was wild. (Jordan)

Blagden and Pemberton (2010; also see Waldram, 2007; Cowburn, 2007) discuss the social and moral dilemmas which can be associated with conducting research with those convicted of sexual offences, such as whether or not it is valid to even give them a voice considering the nature of their offences. Throughout the fieldwork period the researcher maintained that he did not want to know any of the young men's charges. The researcher continued with this approach whilst conducting research on C2, the landing designated to house vulnerable prisoners, often for the nature of their offences. During the fieldwork he was made aware that some of the young men were on C2 for sexual offences, but he did not know which ones were in for sex offences and which were not. All the young men, not just those on C2, knew that the researcher did not wish to know their offences. This meant that most of the young men the researcher spoke to on C2 denied being sex offenders and expressed disgust at those who would commit such an offence:

When I was on C1, I was sweet, everything was sweet, and I don't know they just started bringing up to come on this landing and I didn't know what this landing was so I came on to it and found out it was full of rapists and I wanted off it. I wanted off it ever since but they won't let me... Well they all [wider prisoner society] think that I'm a rapist and all that shit because I am on this landing, so this landing fucking is stupid it just brands you. As soon as you come on this landing that's you. People think you are a rapist even if you are not in for a sex offence. (Phillip)

Furthermore, in regards to the experiences of those young men held on C2 they felt that they were treated worse by the prison because of the nature of their crime:

Nah, we're restricted. We are restricted like, like when we get out only half the landing gets out for you know one hour then and we get out for the other hour you know (Tony)

This landing it is shit, can't go off it or anything really much, I mean I can't go down to workshops normally or nothing... I hate it man, say if I was in another house like Beech or C3 or C4, allowed to walk about, go to workshops and all it would be a lot better. It would be an easy time, but on this landing it is just life of a dog, life of a dog, it's crap man... We don't get fuck all man this landing gets jack shit. (Phillip)

The beliefs held by those young men held on C2, that they were “restricted” (Tony) and lived the “life of a dog” (Phillip) added to the stigmatisation and ‘root’ label placed on them by the wider prisoner society. Indeed, the existence of Vulnerable Prison Units and segregated landings have been criticised because they confirm the stigmatisation of groups of prisoners and restrict the provision of opportunities for their inhabitants (Hay and Sparks, 1996). In terms of the experiences of those vulnerable prisoners held on C2 it is evident that being held on a segregated landing contributed to their further subordination and solidified the gendered hierarchies with the institution.

This section has explored the interpersonal power relationships amongst the prisoners in Hydebank. It has highlighted that although young men in prison may be socially marginalised and feel powerless in the context of wider society, they can possess strong feelings of power amongst the inter-prisoner group. A product of this is the social and physical subjugation of young men within Hydebank. The subordination of masculinities within the prison setting is a strategy used by some young men to present a socially acceptable expression of masculinity to the wider group. The subordination of young men who do not possess traits aligned with the hegemonic expression reaffirms the dominant ideal in the prisoner hierarchy.

6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has examined the varying power relations present within Hydebank. It has examined how these gendered power relationships impact young men's experiences of prison and shape masculinities within the institution.

Beginning with the examination of the gendered power relationship between the young men and the institution, this chapter explored how young men experienced and negotiated institutional power. The dominance of the institution over the prisoners removes senses of independence and autonomy, prompting feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness. These feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness were prominent amongst the young men in Hydebank who frequently discussed feeling vulnerable at the hands of the institution. These discourses centred around the conditions of life, especially in regards to the food, cleanliness, mice and extended periods of 'firewatch'. The increased awareness of cleanliness, analysed through the lens of critical masculinities studies highlights the need for control over one's environment (Sloan, 2016). Poor conditions reaffirm the power of the institution, emphasise the repeated use of prison space and its lack of individuality, for the young men in Hydebank this degradation was distinctly felt. Indeed, the frequent use of 'firewatch' served as a continuous reminder of the dominance of the prison over the young men, reiterating the young men's subordinate position. With every element of young men's life being restricted and monitored, feelings of powerless and challenges to their masculinities in terms of control and loss of autonomy were common.

Additionally, the power of the institution and the implementation of its regime contributed to hierarchies emerging amongst the young men. The PREPS acted as a filter, moving all the least compliant and drug using young men to the lowest levels of enhancement in Beech. This had implications in terms of the inter-prisoner gendered power relationships within Hydebank. During the fieldwork period a relatively large proportion of the young men from the 'Bower' estate were held on the lower landings in Beech House. While PREPS serves to individualise prisoners and dilute the sense of collectiveness amongst the group, this proves extremely difficult if individuals possess strong bonds prior to entering the institution. Many of the young men spoke of the difficulties of pursuing positive behaviour while on the same landing as friends from the outside. Subsequently, young men who are on the same landing or in the same house as their peers from the outside then find it difficult to progress to the higher landings and more enhanced regime. The regime, therefore, created a 'power vacuum' by filtering the least compliant prisoners to the bottom of the system and housing them with prisoners from their own area – who were also at times their co-accused – in Beech. While the dominance of Belfast based

gangs may draw comparisons to ‘imported’ prison theories and literature, in particular Jacobs (1977), this chapter has examined how forms of power implemented by Hydebank through PREPS, the nature of the regime and the institutional design of the prison can affect inter-prisoner gendered power relationships and shape masculinities within prisons.

In relation to the staff-prisoner gendered power relationship, it was evident through observations that Hydebank’s prisoners were not subjected to unaccountable callousness which may have permeated prison institutions in the past. There was not a continually antagonistic relationship between the prison staff and the young men, however the relationship was by no means harmonious. The ground level prison officers in Hydebank had significant discretionary power in relation to the PREPS, they were central in deciding what level of regime and landing the young men where on. Therefore, daily interactions between young men and staff, particularly on the landings, were also characterised by discretionary control and conscious behavioural consideration. The level of power possessed by the ground level staff was significant enough to affect young men’s experiences of, resulting in claims of ‘favouritism’, however this was difficult to prove.

The nature of the PREPS and the level of power held by staff resulted in the young men recognising the nature of the discrepancies within the PREPS and as a result spoke of ‘playing the game’ or ‘manipulating’ the system. They knew the ground level staff were key to the PREPS system so they claimed that they played them, “yes sir, no sir three bags full sir” (Jordan). However, although it appeared that the young men where behaving and effectively self-governing, the CJINI (2016b) report highlighted that indicators on violence were not accurate or being monitored sufficiently with some incidents of bullying not recorded (CJINI, 2016b). This suggests that certain aspects of imprisonment were being pushed further underground or not being reported. Discrete and unreported fighting could again be linked to the regime and the individualisation of young men. Most of the young men are aware of the PREPS and are conscious about losing privileges so choose to fight in private. This is supported by the CJINI (2016b: 12) report which highlighted there had been an increase in bullying and “young men reported that they felt more unsafe than at the last inspection”, however “recorded levels of violence were not excessive”. Increased bullying and fear of violence, but lower recording of the incidents suggests there is a “dark figure” (Biderman and Reiss, 1967: 1) of

unrecorded incidents within the institution. Examining this trend at a deeper level it appears that the young men are co-operating in their own incarceration, effectively governing themselves, but in the context of discretionary staff power. In practice, they are fighting in private so as not to draw the attention of staff, allowing them to operate the informal market, be involved in violence and intimidation, while simultaneously progressing through the PREPS.

As is evident throughout this chapter, power is interpersonal and although these young men may be the most marginalised within society they can possess feelings of power and dominance amongst their peers. This was highlighted through the examination of the ‘Bower Hoods’, a group of young men who reportedly controlled the informal market and exercised a degree of power over other young men within the prison. These young men were reportedly in control of fighting, the informal economy and maintain inter-prisoner power through their own adaptations of manipulation and inducement. A culture of violence was conspicuous and intertwined with the maintenance of power and control within the setting. Juxtaposing these perceptions of power amongst the inter-prisoner group, it was clear that subordination – both social and physical – was common in Hydebank, thus certifying the prisoner hierarchy. As was evidenced by the research, there was a clear social subordination of certain expressions of masculinity that were perceived to be weak or inadequate when measured against the dominant expression. In terms of physical subordination, C2 held those prisoners colloquially referred to as ‘roots’, who were deemed to be vulnerable for various reasons, including the nature of their crimes. For some young men, in terms of masculinities, this was a strategy to present a socially accepted expression of masculinity for the wider group. Public displays of distaste towards suspected sex offenders through discourse or physical violent acts became another measure of assuring the hegemonic ideal within the prison.

7 Research findings: “Can’t Hack the Whack”: Exploring Young Men’s Gendered Experiences of Time in Prison

7.1 Introduction

Time and imprisonment are inextricably linked, as time is the structural dimension for imprisonment (Cope, 2003; Sparks et al., 1996). Time structures control how long an individual is sentenced for, how long they have to spend with visitors, how long to shower, associate eat and so on. Prisoners are thus forced to live by prison time which, in turn, destroys their sense of temporal autonomy (Medlicott, 1999). Although there is a growing body of literature which documents prisoners’ experiences of time in custody (Cope, 2003; Wahidin and Tate, 2005; Sloan, 2016) and “prison is usually the experience of young men” (Jamieson and Grounds, 2005: 53), there are few studies which focus on young men’s gendered experiences of time in prison (Cope, 2003).

This dearth of research is somewhat surprising considering that studies, such as Block et al. (1998), have identified that time is perceived differently by individuals depending on their age. Block et al. suggest that as individuals grow older time passes faster subjectively (Block et al., 1998). Indeed, it has been argued that time-awareness, perceptions and estimations change as people grow older (Locsin, 1993; Wittmann and Lehnhoff, 2005). Research focusing on perceptions of time within the prison context have had similar findings, with Shover (1985) identifying that many older prisoners felt that time in prison passed much faster than when they were younger. This resulted in older prisoners placing a higher value on the remaining years of their life than they had previously and perceived prison more as a waste of their life than their younger counterparts (Shover, 1985). Farber (1944) had similar findings, identifying that younger prisoners – under the age of 26 – dealt better with comprehending their prison sentence as they viewed it as a “temporary marking of time” and were optimistic about their youth and life post-release (Farber, 1944: 175). However, although younger prisoners may be more optimistic about the time that they have temporarily spent in prison, because time passes slower for younger prisoners, it can make the prison experience harder. As younger prisoners perceive time to be passing slower or ‘dragging’, it may force them to think more about family, friends and relationships (Shover, 1985).

Considering these issues, this chapter explores young men's gendered experiences of time in prison. To achieve this the chapter begins by examining the relationship between time and punishment before exploring how time in prison can be experienced as gendered. Building on this, the chapter then draws upon primary findings from Hydebank to explore how young men experience time in prison through the lens of critical masculinities studies. Based on themes from the primary findings, the rest of the chapter is split into three sections which each examines a different aspect of young men's gendered temporal prison experiences. The first examines how young men's capacity to cope with their 'whack' of time in prison can result in those who 'can't hack the whack' becoming labelled 'heavy-whackers' and subjected to stigmatisation and bullying. The second focuses on how the length of time spent in prison contributes to the creation of a gendered temporal hierarchy and how masculine notions of visibility, in the form of prisoner numbers and graffiti, contribute to this. The final section examines how certain young men attempt to subvert gendered notions of time in prison to ascertain the status of Young-Elders, existing relatively free from stigmatisation on the most enhanced landings. The chapter begins with a brief discussion on time-punishment and the gendered nature of prison time before progressing on to the findings from the study.

7.2 Time-punishment

Through time-punishment the state quantifies a prisoner's debt to society in the currency of time (Cope, 2003). The principle underlying this is that linear time, travelling in one direction, ends with mortality, which should – but does not always – impart on individuals a sense of urgency to best use time. Thus, an individual is punished through imprisonment and the removal of time from their life which cannot be regained (Wahidin, 2006). Awareness surrounding the value of time has increased since the development of industrialisation, where time became a tool in the structuration of power relations through the introduction of time-tables and ritually ordered time (Foucault, 1977). As a product of early capitalism and the imposition of time-discipline, concepts regarding progress, development and achievement within linearity became implicitly embedded within the lives of individuals in capitalist societies (Medlicott, 1999). Throughout the period of industrialisation, time became an economic variable, inter-connected with labour and capital, a quantified resource measured in lengths (Wahidin, 2006). In terms of imprisonment,

time is largely externally controlled: the period of imprisonment is determined by the court, eligibility for parole decided by governors and prison officials and daily routines moderated by prison staff who enforce the regime (Cope, 2003). Time becomes a tradable commodity – a currency that can be used as a method for further punishment, extending the sentence – or a reward for good behaviour, via early release (Wahidin, 2006).

Control in prison is exercised by the institution through time-discipline which limits the individual's capacity to make decisions regarding their daily lives (Foucault, 1977). Time-discipline is enacted through structured time-tabling of the prisoner's movements, ensuring the operational needs of the regime (Wahidin, 2006). This is juxtaposed with life in the community where individuals have a degree of autonomy over menial daily decisions and how to spend their time. In contrast, in prison individual's control over time is removed and instead controlled by the prison (Cope, 2003), thus limiting their autonomy (Foucault, 1977). Through the strict implementation of timetables, counting procedures and observation as disciplinary measures, time-discipline has psychological effects on inmates (Scruton et al., 1991). Repetition, monotony and enforced time-tabling within prison are stressful and painful for many prisoners (Medlicott, 1994).

In contemporary prisons, time has become integral to policies regarding the daily regime. For example, the NIPS rules guide the regime in the training and treatment of prisoners and state that “work of a useful nature or other purposeful activities shall be provided to keep prisoners actively employed during their normal day” (NIPS, 1995: Rule 51.1). Such rules highlight the importance of the positive and productive use of time in prison and preparations for the future. This is measured through the assessment of ‘purposeful activity’, one of the key criteria in the inspection of prisons (HMIP, 2018). As a result, added emphasis is placed upon the value of time and how it is spent within the prison setting (Sloan, 2016). Wahidin (2006) argues that if an individual has less time, then time has greater value. In conjunction, the value of time is also dependent on whether the individual has control of time. Time within the prison setting (in most regards) is not valuable to prisoners as the prisoners are not in a position to determine how they spend their time. However, the time that they lose throughout their period of incapacitation generally has great value (albeit largely negative) because it is a representation of

how they would have spent their time if it did belong to them. It is for these reasons that time in prison can be problematic for prisoners to deal with (Wahidin, 2006).

Indeed, studies such as Cohen and Taylor (1972) have examined the effects of long-term imprisonment on prisoners, finding that one of the most vividly felt pains of imprisonment was the emptiness of time. Participants in their study feared that time lost in prison threatened their relationship with wider society and their personal identity. The authors found that in attempts to avoid the deterioration of self-identity the participants engaged in two survival strategies: retreating and withdrawing themselves from the situation; or fighting, resisting the institution in different ways, such as attempting to escape, campaigning or striking. Furthermore, Cohen and Taylor (1972) found that long-term prisoners had distorted perceptions of time. They found that this was partly due to the highly routinised and disciplined prison regime, but mostly because of the prisoners' continued "attempts to survive" (Cohen and Taylor, 1972: 9). Cohen and Taylor (1972) argue that imprisonment creates a highly dependent and ordered existence for prisoners and affects the way prisoners perceive and relate to the environment. They argue that this results in prisoner's perceptions of time becoming distorted, feeling an "extended sense of the present" (Brown, 2003: 14).

Crewe (2009) suggests that prisoners adapt or adjust to prison life in a variety of ways and categorises these accordingly. He argues that these typologies, such as stoics, retreatists and pragmatists, are not restrictive and prisoners are not statically positioned within one typology throughout their prison experience (Crewe, 2009). In their study, examining the impact of long-term imprisonment, Crewe et al. (2017: 517) found that most long-term prisoners shift away from a reactive approach to imprisonment to one that is productive "as they learn to "swim with", rather than against, the tide of their situation". The authors found that long-term prisoners find avenues for managing their time, adapting to their sentence and shifting their conception of control in the aim of turning their time in prison into a constructive experience (Crewe et al., 2017). Building upon the discussion regarding time and punishment considered throughout this section, the following section explores how time can be examined through a gendered lens.

7.3 Gendered time

The variables of time in relation to imprisonment have been discussed, however what is rarely explored in academic discourse particularly in relation to young men in prison, is the gendered nature of time in prison. Time is intricately intertwined with an individual's identity (Medlicott, 1999). By exploring prisoner identity and experiences of prison it can be understood how time is a constituent part of the construction of masculinities within prison (Wahidin and Tate, 2005). Linearity is a key tenet of capitalist economies (Odih, 1999) and thus connections are made between linear time and masculinities, whereby masculine time is connected to archetypal masculine traits of control, status and power (Odih, 1999; Shirani and Henwood, 2011).

The prison regime is more cyclical – in its mundane repetition of daily events – than linear, in order to serve its operational purpose. Therefore, for men within the prison setting, linearity, planning for the future and having goals, are difficult to achieve and comprehend. As a result, the punishment combination of linearity, in terms of sentence, and cyclicity, in terms of daily regime, can disrupt the prisoners' "psychological time consciousness" (Medlicott, 2008: 293). Furthermore, prison in its conception and practice, is deemed an ultra-masculine environment shaped by hierarchical power structures, traditional male sex-role stereotypes and male models of domination (Lutze, 2003). Within the prison environment, the culmination of the 'pains of imprisonment' (Sykes, 1958) and the immersion into a single-sexed ultra-masculine community has a significant impact on an individual's gender identity and masculinities are "besieged from every side" (Newton, 1994: 197). The loss of temporal autonomy and constant forced repetition of daily events and interactions, situates young men in a position of subordination, at the mercy of institutional power and discretion (Sloan, 2016). As a result, gender can become re-inscribed and performed differently within the prison setting as a resistance to the loss of temporal autonomy (Wahidin and Tate, 2005).

Indeed, studies such as Toch (1998), have highlighted how men, when confronted with the loss of autonomy and control and positioned within the ultra-masculine prison environment respond by constructing a 'hyper-masculine' expression of masculinity characterised by toughness, aggression and stoicism

(Toch, 1998). Similarly, Jewkes (2005) suggests that some men act in a more ‘masculine’ way to preserve a sense of masculine self in an environment which removes senses of power and autonomy. As has been documented in this chapter thus far, perceptions and experiences of time spent in prison shape expressions of masculinity within the prison setting. However, there exists a dearth of research which focuses on young men’s gendered experiences of time in prison. Drawing upon primary findings from Hydebank the remainder of this chapter explores how young men experience time in prison as gendered through three themes: heavy-whacking, the gendered prisoner hierarchy and the Young-Elders.

7.4 ‘Heavy-whacking’

Reference to time in Hydebank was common amongst the young men, who regularly referred to their time in prison as their ‘whack’, “as in a whack of time... the big whack of time you have been given” (Aaron). As described by Aaron, time was often referred to as something which was given to the young men, as opposed to taken away. Many of the young men looked up to those on longer sentences or were often proud of the amount of time they themselves had spent in prison. Therefore, viewing the time taken from them through the prison sentence, as something that was ‘given’, was an approach based on bravado; being proud of their sentence, but also appearing – at surface level – to neglect the negative affects it was having on their lives: separating them from home, friends and family; as well as curtailing any opportunities they may have had outside prison.

As previously mentioned, the ultra-masculine prison environment threatens men’s autonomy and control (Toch, 1998; Jewkes, 2005). As a result, some men in prison utilise behaviours associated with ‘hypermasculinity’ such as violence, aggression and stoicism (Toch, 1998) as a means of reconstructing and preserving a sense of masculine self (Jewkes, 2005). Within the Hydebank context, in terms of their approach towards time spent in prison, many of the young men adhered to these extremes. The stoical, aggressive and violent expression of masculinity was idealised and therefore it became the hegemonic expression of masculinity amongst the prisoner group (Connell, 1987; 1995). In terms of discourse regarding time in prison, the idealisation of this hegemonic expression of masculinity was particularly evident throughout the observational period and interviews. Elements of bravado

and machismo were overtly displayed and young men often portrayed masculinities which suggested that they were not struggling with the rigours of time spent in prison, that it was a ‘gift’, ‘easy’ and not a problem for them. As expressed by Aaron:

I’ve been here for a long time but I know I could easily do 20 years in prison, no sweat. It wouldn’t bother me, but some people struggle with it.

In contrast, those who could not deal with their time in prison were labelled ‘heavy-whackers’ and it was deemed that they ‘can’t hack the whack’ of time they had been given. Those young men who were deemed ‘heavy-whackers’ were often the subjects of jokes and even bullying, as explained by Brendy, “it is an insult like, it’s ‘you’re a heavy-whacking bastard’ or ‘you can’t hack the whack’”. There was a set of behavioural traits that characterised the ‘heavy-whacker’ and not being able to ‘hack the whack’, behaviour which usually – but not always – occurred during periods of lock-up:

Bang, kick, whallop [their cell door], they just can’t do their time. Eejits. People are called ‘heavy-whackers’ because they can’t do their time, they’re scared [*And what about someone who can hack their time?*] Kick their feet back, put the TV on, watch TV, smoke a few rollies. (Charles)

As is evident from Charles’ interview, there is a clear differentiation between those who can deal with time and those who cannot. Reiterating Brendy’s quote that “it is an insult”, Charles highlights an apparent stigma associated with those who “can’t do their time” they are “*eejits*” and “*scared*”. It is evident that Charles looked down upon them because they were struggling. In contrast, he conformed to the behavioural traits associated with the hegemonic expression of masculinity within the prisoner society characterised by stoicism and painlessness. Brendy and Dermv further elaborate on the stereotypical behaviour of heavy-whackers:

Can’t hack your whack, somebody who is getting a hard time, they’re constantly yapping, they’re talking to the screws, they’re banging their door, they’re banging their walls, they’re blasting their music. They can’t just sit down and relax. Their head’s gone because they are locked behind their doors... I heavy-whacked for about a week when I came in, solid, just in my room, fucking not speaking and you’re just looking at it thinking I’ve to spend 21 months behind this door. (Brendy)

[Their] head’s gone. Lying in a cell looking at the four walls and the fucking big black door, know what I mean. Haven’t got a TV, stressed to the max, probably haven’t got

money in their phone to phone their family or haven't got visits...or are looking out to do stuff or are looking drugs and can't get it in here, then they are starting to heavy-whack. (Dermy)

Alongside reiterating the difference between heavy-whackers – “their heads gone because they are locked behind their doors” – and those who can “just sit down and relax”, Brendy elaborates on why young men become ‘heavy-whackers’, they are conscious about the time they have lost, that they have no control over. He explains that heavy-whacking begins when you are sitting in your room alone not speaking, “thinking I’ve to spend 21 months behind this door”. Dermy affirms this, stating you are “lying in a cell looking at the four walls and the fucking big black door”. Time lost becomes abundantly apparent for prisoners locked in cells, be it throughout the night or days with no employment, training or education (Cope, 2003). Time spent in cells was seen to be wasted and it was during these periods that the young men reflected on the costs of prison in the context of their lives, what they would be doing and what they were missing out on. As explained by Alfred:

Feeling like shit, constantly thinking about the outside what you would be doing if you were out, what your mates are up to. Like a good sunny day all my mates would be on the drink, I’ll be sitting in here shattered [extremely sad or disappointed].

The effects of time spent in prison have been well documented throughout this chapter, in terms of surviving the process, the individual must learn to “do time” (Wahidin, 2006: 7). Through the process of doing time an individual must develop the ability to resist the institution to prevent the deterioration of self-identity (Smith, 1962; Cohen and Taylor, 1972) or adapt to the institution, shifting their conception of control to reconstruct their prison experience into a positive one (Crewe et al., 2017). It is the individual’s resistance to the pervasive control of the prison and ability to prevent the deterioration of the sense of self that defines their experience of prison (Matthews, 2016). Alongside power, maintaining control has been identified an ever-present characteristic of men’s gender identity in critical masculinities studies (Odi, 1999; Hearn, 2004). Maintaining some sense of control over the ‘minor’ aspects of their life, such as control over: their possessions, their cells and clothes were always immaculate; their bodies, in terms of physique going to the gym regularly and eating healthily; and appearance, weekly haircuts, being

clean shaven and wearing the newest and cleanest clothes and trainers. Having control over all of these ‘minor’ aspects of prison life were of the utmost importance to the young men in Hydebank and failure to have control over them could result in being picked on or bullied. For example, if someone was wearing dirty clothes or trainers they could be labelled a “dirtbird” (Gary) or “stinker” (Brendy).

In prison individuals are aware of the time they are missing in the ‘free world’. To cope with prison individuals must be able to cope with this awareness without letting it destroy their self-identity (Medlicott, 1999). For the young men in Hydebank control of emotions and behaviours during periods of lock-up could be viewed as portrayals of resistance to the invasive power of the institution. In the eyes of the other young men, ‘heavy-whackers’ were not in control, they were unable to control their inner selves, manage their frontstage persona (Goffman, 1959) or find ways to control the time in their cells by finding ways to ‘escape’ and forget about the ‘pains of imprisonment’ (Sykes, 1958). Adam reiterates the connection between heavy-whacking and control of time:

Counting down your days, cutting, not going to classes. Not going to classes is one of the biggest heavy-whacking things you can do like, you just want to spend your time in your room and sleep. It takes longer, you are waking up every half an hour thinking aw that’s four hours done whenever its maybe only 15 or 20 minutes.

Through the quotations explored thus far, it is evident that while the prison as an institution is almost absolute in its power, some expression of agency and ownership or control of time for young men allows them to ameliorate the pains of imprisonment and the feeling of time wasted. When peers bemoaned or were unable to control themselves or deal with the time that had been taken from them they were defined as weak or vulnerable. Adam’s interview begins to draw out some of the other issues relating to ‘heavy-whacking’, it was indeed a blanket term that incorporated many common behaviours associated with struggling with the rigours of imprisonment. It was strongly inter-connected with self-harm, referred to by Adam as “cutting”, and mental health problems. Quotes from interviews with young men elaborate this further:

If somebody calls you a heavy-whacker it’s a bit more serious, because fucking that’s whenever someone’s depressed or hurt or scared. (Gary)

I used to heavy-whack because I was behind the door, and on the old landings cunts used to smoke the electric all the time. Then when you are alone, you've nothing to block it out or take your mind off whatever shit you are going through. You start hearing voices, getting annoyed, getting depressed and then cutting yourself. (Phillip)

Essentially, the young men were being stigmatised and labelled by their peers for their visible inability to deal with their time in prison. This label could be applied to those unable to cope with prison both mentally – someone who was “depressed or hurt or scared” (Gary) – and/or physically, for example by “cutting yourself” (Phillip). It was also largely recognised by the staff:

Heavy-whacker is (when) you can't do your time, especially when the door is closed. You can't do your time... they would say that (when) somebody is always on the bell, creating trouble, setting off sprinklers. Even though it will end up with them being moved or charged or whatever it is still the door is open they are getting the attention... unfortunately then a lot of them turn to self-harm and go down that route then, something that they never would have done before, but then in here... (Prison Officer C)

As has already been evidenced, bullying was common in Hydebank. ‘Smoking the electric’ was a regular occurrence. Identifying individuals who were vulnerable or struggling with the rigours of imprisonment, a few young men would clandestinely enter into the victim's room while it was unattended and cover one of their plugs (usually the TV plug), with shower gel, plug it into the wall and turn the switch on. Mark describes the process in his interview:

Last night I was in my room and went for a phone call and I left my cell door open and I came back and there was a load of shower gel on my plug and it was like plugged into the wall and they had it turned on so my electric was off.

The term ‘smoking the electric’ had two certain outcomes. Firstly, it broke the individual's electrical device which the plug was attached to. Secondly, it meant that all the electricity in the victim's cell went off for around 24 hours until the prison fixed it. On some occasions the blown fuse could cause the electricity on the whole landing to go out. For the perpetrators, the motivation was supposedly entertainment, the victim was usually targeted for their perceived vulnerability and the perpetrators would find it amusing listening to the victim crying or calling for staff throughout

the night. On the occasions where the electricity went out on the whole landing it served as a method of certifying the perpetrator's dominant position amongst the young men, as it highlighted the contrast between how the more dominant perpetrators could cope easily without their electricity and the 'heavy-whackers' struggled.

As discussed throughout this section thus far, within the male prison environment the culmination of the pains of imprisonment and the immersion into a single-sexed community poses a significant threat to masculinities (Newton, 1994). This has an impact on how men interact with one another in regards to public performances of masculinities and can result in some men believing it is necessary to portray a tough and dominant expression of masculinity within the prison setting. Furthermore, the absence of women amongst the prisoner society, means there is no method for men to juxtapose their masculinity to societal notions of 'femininity' (Jewkes, 2005; also see Connell, 2005) and since half of a usual audience is denied to the prisoner their self-image is in danger of becoming fractured or incomplete (Sykes, 1958). Without expressions of 'femininity' to situate expressions of masculinity against, masculinities must compete against one another which results in a gendered hierarchy. In this gendered hierarchy expressions of masculinity that are perceived to be weak or vulnerable can become subjugated and subordinated, further promoting the independency and status of the idealised hegemonic expression within the prisoner group (Sloan, 2016). Indeed, traits considered by some men in prison to be 'feminine', such as showing emotions or requiring help, can become the targets of victimisation (Toch, 1992; Edgar and O'Donnell, 1998). The bullying and stigmatisation of those who could not deal with their time in prison, particularly during long periods of lock-up, served to solidify the hegemonic expression of masculinity within the Hydebank prisoner society.

These expressions of masculinity were idealised. However, the reactions of young men in Hydebank to their prison time are reflective of the processes boys go through in early periods of socialisation. Boys are taught 'not to cry', and instead to be 'tough' and conceal emotions (Kimmel and Ferber, 2016). Although some young men continued to struggle with the time they had been 'given' throughout their sentence or time imprisoned on remand, many claimed only to have 'heavy-whacked' in early periods of imprisonment, "I heavy-whacked for about a week

when I came in” (Brendy). The labelling and stigmatisation regarding ‘heavy-whacking’ was in some respects a form of peer socialisation for young men in the early part of their sentences. It was a method whereby young prisoners prevented other young men from vocalising their troubles, forcing them to deal with these internally. An underlying reason behind this was that constant complaining and visible vulnerability served as a reminder to others of their own vulnerabilities, what they were missing out on, on the outside and the problems they themselves were facing in prison. In essence, discouraging such displays was a form of self-protection, as some of the interviews reflected:

Heavy-whacker... it’s if you are running about every day complaining. Like if you complain about everything, every single day, then you are not doing your whack. See if you are just doing your whack, you are chilling out and you are doing it. You have your head down, you’re not complaining about nothing, you take it and everything how it is, know what I mean. You are taking it on the chin [*So what if you can’t do your whack?*] If you can’t do your whack, you are in your room hitting your bell all the time, you’re fucking yapping to the staff, complaining about stuff, you are complaining to the other inmates, every day you have about seven new things to complain about, that’s heavy-whacking. People don’t want to hear it. Like if I am sitting eating my dinner, I don’t wanna hear about some wee man only in, sitting going on about all stuff that he doesn’t like about the place. I don’t want to hear it, I will literally tell him to “fuck up”... if you can’t hack it you get grieved, that’s too bad. It seems harsh, but here it seemed harsh to me when I came in... back then if you locked at night and you were on your bell... someone would have been in your room to hit you a slap the next day... you hear people complaining about stupid stuff, stuff that no-one is going to change, that’s just the way it is. (Martin)

Someone who can’t do their whack, can’t do the time behind the door, they’re always complaining about something or worrying about something, just not shutting off and getting on with the day. Always on the door shouting... Once you understand you are not going anywhere anytime soon and this is what it is, it is the best thing for you. Just understand it and know it. Nothing is going to change, no matter how much you cut yourself or you complain or bang your door or push your bells or whatever it’s not going to work so just get on with it. (Zack)

So in a sense the bullying, labelling and stigmatisation of ‘heavy-whackers’ was a method of censorship and group socialisation, stopping young men constantly reminding the other young men about the penal environment and their own vulnerabilities. In the same way boys at a young age are taught not to cry and not to

partake in “sissy stuff” (Kimmel, 2008: 85), young men in Hydebank are taught by their peers not to complain, to internalise and mask their vulnerabilities and not remind the other young men of the pains of imprisonment. From a profeminist standpoint it is important to be reflexive and challenge dominant forms of male behaviour. Those involved in the politics of profeminism generally agree that the starting point for feminist activism should be the critical examination of masculinities and masculinity construction as men’s identities are seen to be a site for gender politics (Ashe, 2007). In relation to the labelling and subsequent stigmatisation of ‘heavy-whackers’ in Hydebank, this form of prison socialisation is damaging for young men as internalising problems has connections to the use of self-harm and substance abuse to cope (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8). Furthermore, the belief that dominant masculinities are inherently connected to strength, power and emotional fortitude have been historically damaging to women and key beliefs in the sustainment and support of patriarchy. The following section will discuss in greater detail how perceptions of time in Hydebank contributed to a gendered temporal hierarchy amongst prisoners.

7.5 Time and hierarchy

Previous studies have suggested that those who have spent longer in the prison setting generally garner more respect from the wider prison group. As documented by Wahidin (2006), in relation to prison ‘Elders’, the increased respect for those who have been in prison longer is generally due to their experiences and knowledge regarding the setting. Within Hydebank time was significant in a specific way, the length of time spent in prison represented how serious an offender an individual was. Time had become a symbol and a token. The longer a young man had been in prison the more serious his crime, and the amount of times he had been in prison indicated how committed a ‘criminal’ he was perceived to be. In many circumstances this was synonymous with the respect the young men held among the other inmates and as a result contributed to their position within the prisoner hierarchy. There were various avenues for reaffirming this status or promoting it to the other young men. In terms of Hydebank as an institution’s contribution to this, all the young men possessed identity cards detailing their name and prisoner number. These identity cards were kept on lanyards and were used for identification for workshops, education, the gym and so on. The significance was the public display of the young men’s prisoner

numbers, which were discussed frequently. The lower the number the longer the young men had been in the institution. Some of the young men were proud of this, and talked about it boastingly, for the card had become a badge of honour, “when I leave here I’ll probably be the lowest number” (Leo). They also looked up to others who had lower numbers, as is evident from an extract from field notes:

As we were walking towards the Cabin, Aaron was walking towards us. As he was approaching Mark nudged me and said “see him, he’s the hardest man in the prison”... I hadn’t seen Aaron in a few weeks so we talked for a while... As we were talking Mark pointed to Aaron’s identity card on his lanyard and said “look at that Conor, see the way it says six thousand in the prisoner number that’s how you know he’s done a whack, it’s up at like nine thousand odds now [numbers changed to ensure anonymity]”³³.
(September)

Therefore, Hydebank as an institution, wittingly or unwittingly, contributed to the relations and cultural discourse surrounding time and hierarchy. Firstly, it gave ascending prisoner numbers to the young men, and secondly, it made them visible for all young men via the lanyards. Sloan (2016) argues that visibility is essential to hegemonic masculinities because without visible displays, individuals have nothing to align themselves with or compare themselves to. Within the prison environment the individual becomes invisible from the outside world, thus the audience changes, from peers or family to other prisoners and prison staff. Therefore, prisoners have to make greater efforts to overcome invisibility than in the ‘free world’. Reputation stems from visibility and is achieved through socially acceptable behaviours, it is key that men are visible to the specific audience that matters to them (Sloan, 2016). Through the lanyards, Hydebank provided the young men with an avenue for visibly promoting the length of time they had spent in the institution and thus reinforced their position within the prisoner hierarchy.

33 On a number of occasions Aaron mentioned to the author that he had never been in a fight in the institution, yet it was evident he garnered a lot of respect from all of the young men within Hydebank. The respect he received is evident in the quotation from Mark, that Aaron was the “hardest” in the prison. Being ‘hard’ was associated with fighting and being able to handle oneself physically. As Aaron had never been in a fight, but was one of the longest serving prisoners (and had one of the lowest prisoner numbers) in the institution it was evident that it was due to the length of his sentence he was deemed to be the “hardest” and subsequently held so much respect.

Another avenue of masculine visibility in Hydebank was graffiti. Through graffiti the young men publically displayed their accumulation of time within the institution. Graffiti was found in most cells, association rooms and various tables, chairs and walls. In most ‘mentions’³⁴ the young men stated their name or nickname, the area they were from, their prisoner number, entry date, exit date and the amount of times that they had been in prison. The reasoning behind this was discussed in Gary’s interview:

People will write their sentences like that, so like if you’re sentenced in 2013 and you’re not getting out for like five years, you’ll write from then until your release date [*Does it show a pride in the length of time you’ve been here?*] Fuck, yeah...if there are certain boys who have done whacks and they have their name up somewhere where it’s gonna be kept then yeah [*I mean more about the length of time it says, on that one for example [researcher points to the wall], that they will be in for 5 years?*] I think just that it shows that they are in for something serious, I suppose it relates to what they are in for. You know if you see somebody with like ten years, like there was a boy out there who was in for ten years and if you see that then there’s only a couple of things that your gonna think, either he is in for a sex offence or he is in for seriously hurting someone else, so yeah it kind of goes by that too.

Wilson (2008) argues that much of the graffiti in prison reflects the concerns of men intrinsic to imprisonment, such as violence, power, boredom and the need for self-affirmation. She found that graffiti could be used to establish, re-establish or promote one’s prison network, through the disclosure of areas, friends and gangs. Wilson identified how prisoners would write their ‘rap sheet’ – a list of charges and/or convictions – in ‘tags’, as a method of conveying to other prisoners that they were dangerous and ward off potential threats (Wilson, 2008). Denton (2001) had similar findings where he found that graffiti in this regard was a sort of self-declaration and an assertion of agency. It could place the graffitist within the prison’s power structure, for example if they claimed membership to the gang in control of the informal economy (Denton, 2001). Masculinities are socially and culturally dependent on audiences, time and space which can all be utilised as methods in achieving expressions of masculinity (Sloan, 2016). Within the Hydebank context, the inclusion of the individual’s prisoner number in the tag highlighted how long

34 A ‘mention’ or ‘tag’ is the recording of names, and sometimes dates through graffiti (Wilson, 2008).

they had been in the prison. Subsequently, in line with the cultural discourse regarding time within the institution, promoting their positioning within the hierarchy. The promotion and visibility of one's criminal record or time(s) spent in prison was a method of achieving this. Gerard elaborates:

It becomes I think nearly a sense of achievement, that you are able to manage to get through it and I think you do have guys that have maybe achieved very little other in their lives and that is their badge of honour. That they have done their whack for 6 years... I think that is maybe just a hard man image you know, 'aw I have done this amount of time in jail'.

Indeed, the admiration shown by young men to those on longer sentences was inversely reciprocated by those serving longer sentences who looked down upon the young men imprisoned for shorter periods:

Those on the shorter sentences are more likely to come in and fuck about. One guy thought he was mad, he said to me he was in for 6 months as if it was a long stretch. I just laughed at him, I've spent longer than that on the prison bus. (Aaron)

As a result of the long-time Aaron had spent in prison – and subsequently the length of time spent going backwards and forwards from court – he saw himself as higher in the prisoner hierarchy. The construction of such a hierarchy was also recognised by the staff:

[Do you think that there are other people in here who others would look up to maybe for the nature of the crime they are in for?] Yeah very much so, very, very much so. That's something that you will get, people from certain areas of Belfast, or parts of Northern Ireland, and the bigger the crime then they'll maybe think that that is the sort of top man in that area. (Prison Support Staff C)

In the same regard, in some circumstances a longer sentence certified the reputation and respect some young men were given. As a result, these cultural discourses and beliefs provided some young men the opportunity to engage positively with the institution and regime without being stigmatised by their peers. This is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

7.6 The Young-Elders

The other younger prisoners don't know how to play the game; you have to hang your hood up in here. You can't get on like a wee dick, you are just making it hard for yourself. I hung my hood up years ago, it's got cobwebs in it now. (Aaron)

According to Connell (1987; 1995) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), the hegemonic expression of masculinity within a culture, society or institution is the expression which most men compare themselves to and measure themselves against. Research consistently identifies that the hegemonic expression of masculinity amongst the prisoner society is one of controlled aggression, characterised by homophobia, rejection of traces of weakness and attributes normally associated with 'femininity' and constant competition for dominance, power and control. It is an expression which is reinforced through the subordination and subjugation of less powerful expressions of masculinity (see Scraton et al., 1991).

However, while "alternative ways of achieving masculinity" (Crewe, 2009: 437) within the prison setting can become "largely suppressed" (Abrams et al., 2008: 22) and "excluded" (Crewe, 2014: 397), in some cultures marginalised men can compensate for their subordination by defying hegemonic masculinity and constructing alternative expressions of masculinity (Courtenay, 2000). Indeed, Hall (2002: 37) supports this, arguing that there exists a diversity of "alternative gendered identities that can contest this norm in progressive ways". As explained by Pyke (1996: 531) men "with their masculine identity and self-esteem undermined by their subordinate order-taking position in relation to higher-status males" can utilise alternative avenues and resources to "reconstruct their position as embodying true masculinity". For example, the "adoption of student, artisan or tradesman identities" may provide alternatives to the dominant and violent expression of masculinity found in prisons (Jewkes, 2005: 57).

Within Hydebank's cultural environment, the large majority of young men compared themselves to, and measured themselves against, dominant, aggressive and violent expressions of masculinity. However, 'alternative' expressions of masculinity existed within the Hydebank context, such as 'father', 'employed' and 'fiancé' (deemed in a wider social context to be associated with the hegemonic ideals

of financial independence, control and provision). These expressions significantly differed from the dominant expressions of masculinity adopted by the wider group of young men. Although, avenues for performing these expressions of masculinity were restricted within the prison environment (see Sykes, 1958) some young men used these identities as their justification for compliance and engagement with the institution. In many instances they were the longest serving prisoners and while ‘alternative’ expressions of masculinity can often be subordinated, subjugated, “largely suppressed” (Abrams et al., 2008: 22) and “excluded” (Crewe, 2014: 397), this group of young men were largely respected within the prisoner society. Drawing on the concept of prison elders (discussed below), the current research has categorised and theorised this group of young men as the ‘Young-Elders’. The Young-Elders were largely respected by the prisoner society based on the time they had already and/or were due to spend in prison. The Young-Elders subverted the cultural subtexts surrounding time and criminality as a method of ascertaining expressions of masculinity which were both respected by the wider group of young men, but also conformed to the expectations of the institution (and to those of ‘respectable’ society in the ‘free world’).

The Young-Elders were primarily located on the most enhanced landings in the prison where ‘good behaviour’ and passing drugs tests were rewarded with more privileges, such as longer association time and cooking facilities. It was not the case that the identities portrayed by the Young-Elders such as father, earned the wider respect from the prisoner society, as many of the least compliant prisoners in the institution were fathers. Nor was it the behaviour of the Young-Elders that was respected, as others who did try to ‘behave’ were consequently stigmatised (see Chapter 6). The length of time the Young-Elders’ spent in prison, and the cultural subtexts which surrounded time and criminality, warranted respect. This allowed the Young-Elders to subscribe to expressions of masculinity which did not conform with those that dominated Hydebank’s prisoner society. However, despite this they remained relatively free from stigmatisation by their peers.

In an interview, one of the ‘Young Elders’ on C5 (the most enhanced landing in Hydebank) was asked whether the young men on the landing could be deemed to be ‘swats’ by the wider population, and thus labelled and stigmatised for their good behaviour in the ‘College’. He responded:

At the end of the day if you look at us as a group, we are in here for some serious shit, I mean if you look at this landing we have over a hundred years between us (nine on the landing) so they can't look at us like that. (Gerard)

The quote illustrates that due to the length of time the young men had spent in prison – which reflected the seriousness of their crimes – the Young-Elders were relatively immune from peer stigmatisation. Their respect was secured in the eyes of the wider prisoner society due to the length of the sentence they were serving. Consequently, they did not have to re-prove their masculinity (the same respect was not afforded to those deemed to be ‘roots’, whatever the length of their sentence). Many Young-Elders implied they were not concerned about the respect they were shown from their peers, but acknowledged its existence. Respect for prison ‘Elders’ is not something unique to Hydebank. Wahidin and Tate (2005; also see Cohen and Taylor, 1972), identify how ‘Elders’ in prison, in their study women, draw upon their experiences and understandings of age, gender and ethnicity to negotiate the prison setting. In a similar vein, the Young-Elders in Hydebank drew upon cultural understandings of time, experiences of prison and gender to navigate the prison environment; again in parallel with Wahidin and Tate the Young-Elders evidence how a degree of agency is attainable within the institution. The Young-Elders: lived on landings which allowed relatively free movement throughout the prison, their cells were unlocked throughout the day and night, they were trusted to do their own grocery shopping in the local supermarket, did their own cooking and some of them worked in the community during the day.

Although there may be similarities between alternative expressions of masculinity identified in studies such as Abrams et al. (2008) and the Young-Elders, there are some fundamental differences; primarily the fact that the young men are not “suppressed” (Abrams et al., 2008: 22) or “excluded” (Crewe, 2014: 397), but respected. The Young-Elders recognise the power of the prison and as opposed to resisting it, subvert the prisoner society’s gendered notions of time to comply with the prison and regime. In some ways, the Young-Elders reflect the findings of Crewe et al. (2017) in their study on long-term imprisonment. Instead of resisting the institution, idealising the hegemonic expression of masculinity amongst the prisoner society and engaging in the behaviours associated with it, the Young-Elders chose

to engage positively with the institution and ““swim with”, rather than against, the tide of their situation” (Crewe et al., 2017: 517), progressing through the system, relatively free from stigmatisation and subordination due to cultural discourse and beliefs.

For a lot of the Young-Elders employment, financial stability and being able to provide for families and loved ones upon release were significant characteristics in their identity (again these could be indicators of hegemonic masculinity in other environments) (Connell, 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). These identities, characterised by independence and provision, were recognised as masculine by the larger group of young men, but not necessarily sought after traits. For the wider group of young men these traits took a subservient position to more hegemonic prison characteristics such as violence, dominance and aggression. In a similar vein to Farber (1944: 175), the wider group of young men in Hydebank viewed prison as a “temporary marking of time”. Additionally, part of the reasoning behind the cultural idealisation of a hegemonic expression of masculinity and characteristics associated with it may have been because traits such as independence and family provision were unattainable within the prison setting (Farber, 1944; also see Sykes, 1958). However, the main reason was their age. While some of the young men had children, having families and provision for others was seen to be something they would do in the future and for now they were enjoying spending time with friends. In contrast, a smaller group of the Young-Elders were fathers. For these young men fatherhood was the defining feature in their identity. Thus, they desired to get out of prison, change their offending behaviour, get a job and provide stability and financial support for their children:

A big thing for me is, fuck, is my son. I’ve a wee lad at two, Jason, so I mean fucking he needs me, you know what I mean. He needs me more than this place, and I need him more than all this... But yeah my son big, big, big time. You know this place has become home to me and fuck it will be strange, and probably difficult, to leave knowing that I won’t be coming back, fuck, but look what I’ve got to gain, know what I mean, I can be a dad you know. That’s the rest of my life. (Gary)

I’m gonna go and do a degree in engineering... I am studying for it and all like, I have GCSE maths books and all up in my room. If I’m bored or whatever I just sit and do maths... I’m only 21 and I have done six years in jail. That’s bad like and then especially with the child it breaks your heart like... the child is five now, so for the first two and a

half years of her life I was close with her. I bonded with her and she was a wee daddy's girl. To go (from that) until now, where she barely knows who you are, like I don't want to admit that, but I know... You phone her, she knows who it is, but she doesn't know how much it means. She knows, that's my daddy, but the bond is not there anymore. So it's like sometimes you phone her and she has no interest, she is playing with her mates. That sort of thing hurts you like; she would rather play with her mates than talk to her daddy. But there is nothing I can do about it in here is there, so that is why when you are saying about for the next time (I get out), if I get out, I know in my head, I know I have got the determination... I want to do something with my life, for her. (Ryan)

The importance of fatherhood as a key aspect of these young men's expressions of masculinity is evident throughout these quotes. Similar studies focusing on gender and parenthood, such as Bosworth (1999), have identified how parents (in Bosworth's study mothers) find a sense of self and agency in their role as a parent. In her study, Bosworth (1999) identifies how the identity of parenthood becomes a tool of resistance, enabling the prisoners to reconstruct their identities, primarily viewing themselves as mature and mothers. In the same regard, fatherhood can become a dominant gender identity for men in prison (Ugelvik, 2014). In Hydebank, fatherhood was an identity many of the Young-Elders adopted and utilised it as a defining characteristic in their expression of masculinity. Also identifiable in Gary and Ryan's quotations, key elements of desistance literature, such as important relationships and employment, which contribute to individuals moving away from criminality all are interlinked (see Le Bel et al., 2008). Seeing oneself first and foremost as a parent provides motivation to get a job and provide financially for the child, interlinking parenthood and employment.

Desistance literature suggests that offenders desist from crime often as a result of a multiplicity of factors. However, developing non-criminal identities in combination with stable employment and the formation of strong family or relationship connections are regarded as the most significant (Sampson and Laub, 2005; Uggen and Wakefield, 2008). The formation of this non-criminal identity often "takes the form of the 'good parent', 'provider' or 'family man'" (Le Bel et al., 2008: 137), identities which draw deep connections to connotations of manhood and 'doing masculinity', however these connections are rarely made explicit in desistance literature (Carlsson, 2013). However, Carlsson (2013) attempts to make the connection between desistance and masculinity, arguing that as an individual

progresses through the life course different avenues of ‘doing masculinity’ become available, which in turn, facilitate the continuity and progression into non-criminal identities and subsequently desistance from crime. Other theorists such as Deuchar et al. (2015: 725) and Kolind et al. (2017: 3) have labelled these expressions of masculinity “transitional”, as they are transitioning from criminal identities to non-criminal identities.

While examining desistance goes beyond the scope of this thesis, it is evident that the Young-Elders were going through a period of transition. Ciaran, another C5 resident and Young Elder, describes in his interview the positive relationship he has with his fiancée. He discusses how prison made him realise her importance to him, not only in getting through his period of confinement, but also in his life going forward. It was evident that there had been a distinct change in his masculinity and how he views himself:

I have it all planned out like for when I get out, I have a job and all lined up and then I have the woman and all there so hopefully in a year down the line I’ll be able to buy my own house and then settle down and all. It has done me a favour in here I have wised up... I will come out of here a better person too, you know I don’t take drugs and stuff... If I wasn’t with her when I get back out there I would probably go back to the same... If you had no woman like you could go down that same road handy again, you know if you are taking stuff all the time, fuck that... I want to get a house and... I wanna have a fucking family and all by the time I am 30. You know I am still sort of young now, but I just want to have a house and all soon enough and you know settle down definitely. (Ciaran)

As is evident in Ciaran’s quote, his fiancée is a motivation for him to behave well in the prison. In preparation for release, he has employment organised and is hoping to buy a house with her one year after being released from Hydebank. This draws similarities to the connection between strong social controls, stemming from the family or relationships, and desistance from crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003). This transition in identity from offender to parent or fiancé was often synonymous with employment. Some of the young men were fortunate enough to already have employment in the community while being imprisoned in Hydebank, this was key to their Young-Elder identity within the setting:

I work seven days a week in a café in town... it's what I want to do when I get out and I reckon they will keep me on because I have been working for free for so long... I'll be staying away from all the ones I used to run about with when I get out. I'm only 20 and I've spent my last five years in jail, so much time in jail. I'll never be back. I used to ring them all [friends] when I came in, now I only talk to two of them. They all got on with their lives and I'm stuck in here... this is the last time I'll be in definitely, just going to keep my head down the same way I am now [*Does anyone come to see you in the café, family, friends?*] No, I just keep my head down, I don't even want anyone to know I'm doing it. Only my ma and da know, even if I seen someone I knew out on the street [walking past the café] I would turn away straight away. I don't want to risk it for anything, even if they offered me tips I wouldn't take them, risk all I've worked towards for a couple of quid, no way. (Jeremy)

Jeremy's quote evidences that he sees employment as his primary identity and would not risk anything to put this in jeopardy, "even if they offered me tips I wouldn't take them", as currency is obviously forbidden within Hydebank he would not risk taking any in-case he lost his job. The Young-Elders largely adhered to institutional expectations, they often regarded themselves as more mature and occupied what were deemed to be the better jobs within the prison, earned through behaviour and responsibility. Young-Elders did recognise that a lot of the other young men idealised the more aggressive expressions of masculinity which were hegemonic in Hydebank culture, but often looked down upon them:

Aye they think they are in jail to do their whack, they are mad and all, and then some of the stuff they do you just look at them and think you are complete eejits, know what I mean, wired up like. We do some laughing at them like. (Jordan)

Within the context of wider society, the Young-Elders largely conformed to the principles of traditional masculinity within a wider social context. Gaining employment, providing for children and spouses are all elements of traditional masculinity within wider western society (Evans, 2018). Characteristics such as self-confidence, independence, maturity, pride and positivity were common amongst the group of young men on the more enhanced landings. These characteristics, still largely in accordance with hegemonic ideals which existed in Hydebank, alongside their sentences allowed them to be accepted within the Young-Elders group, meaning they were not deemed to be vulnerable and also not victimised.

7.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has explored young men's gendered experiences of time in prison. Prison as an institution removes senses of power and autonomy (Sykes, 1958; Crewe, 2009), in particular, time structures invade all elements of prisoners' lives, destroying their sense of temporal autonomy (Medlicott, 1999). As a result, some men in prison construct an expression of masculinity that is characterised by toughness, aggression and stoicism, to preserve a sense of self (Toch, 1998). Thus, gender identity becomes re-inscribed and performed differently within the prison setting as a product of penal time and a resistance to it (Wahidin and Tate, 2005). Within the Hydebank context reference to time was common amongst the young men. In dealing with time many of the young men adhered to behaviours which characterised the dominant expression of masculinity within the prisoner society including toughness, stoicism and dismissal of emotion. Additionally, the research identified that through the deprivations of imprisonment the need for control becomes emphasised in prison (also see Sloan, 2016). As a result, cultural perceptions and attitudes regarding the control of time shaped young men's experiences. This was evidenced through the subjugation of 'heavy-whackers', those young men who were perceived to be struggling or lacking control over the time they were spending in prison. Specific acts, such as 'smoking the electric', were utilised by some young men to juxtapose their own tough and stoical expressions of masculinity against other 'weaker' masculinities. Within the prison environment the subjugation of 'weak' masculinities, promotes the independency and status of the idealised hegemonic expression of masculinity (Sloan, 2016). As a result, masculinities in Hydebank became hierarchalised (also see Sabo et al., 2001).

However, while the subjugation of those who 'can't hack the whack' was a method for some young men to juxtapose their masculinities against weaker expressions of masculinity in the setting, it was also identified that this form of stigmatisation was a form of prison socialisation. Through the labelling of 'heavy-whackers', in the same way that boys are taught at a young age not to cry (Kimmel and Ferber, 2016), it taught the young men in Hydebank that in order to survive in prison you needed to conceal your emotions. The public display and discussion of emotions reminded the young men of their own pain and suffering which was not

welcomed. Instead, this form of socialisation highlights how damaging dominant expressions of masculinity can be, forcing young men to internalise problems as a prevention method from bullying.

This chapter advances knowledge of young men's gendered experiences of time in prison, highlighting how prison time and gendered hierarchy are integrally linked. Within the Hydebank context the length of prison time one was due to be imprisoned was linked synonymously with the amount of respect the young men held within the institution (with the exception of 'roots') (also see Wahidin, 2006). Through further examination this study highlighted how young men in Hydebank utilised masculine visibility, in the form of prisoner numbers and graffiti, to promote the length and amount of time they had spent in the prison to the wider group. Visibility is essential to theory of hegemonic masculinities because without visible displays of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities men have nothing to align themselves with or compare themselves too (Sloan, 2016). Within the context of Hydebank, in line with cultural notions of time, the young men utilised prisoner numbers and graffiti as a form of masculine visibility and self-promotion and a reminder to the wider group of young men their positioning in the gendered hierarchy.

In correlation with the gendered temporal hierarchy within the institution, this chapter also advanced the study of 'Elders' in prison, coining of the term Young-Elders to explain a unique phenomenon of young men who conformed to the institutions code of conduct, but due to the length of time they had spent in the prison were given a certain amount of respect from the wider group of young men. In a similar vein to Wahidin and Tate (2005), the Young-Elders subverted cultural notions of time to "swim with" (Crewe et al., 2017) the tide of the regime and benefit from the varying enhancements available to them within the institution. In doing so the young men adopted expressions of masculinity and characteristics that differed from those possessed by the wider prisoner society, such as employed. It was identified that the formation of these non-criminal identities was crucial to desistance from crime (Le Bel et al., 2008) and thus through the identification of the Young-Elders within the prison setting provides evidence that certain expressions of masculinity which do not conform to the common hegemonic prison ideology can exist free from stigmatisation. From a profeminist standpoint this is crucial in providing knowledge for addressing perceptions of masculinity common in young

men which have been historically damaging to women and other expressions of masculinity.

8 Research findings: Exploring the sources of vulnerability which shape masculinities in Hydebank

8.1 Introduction

Young men in prison are often viewed to be an “inherently vulnerable group” (Sloan, 2016: 131). Within the prison setting a variation of sources of vulnerability are commonplace such as substance misuse issues, victimisation and self-harm (Townsend, 2007). However, it is rare for expressions of masculinity to be associated with vulnerability. Instead, many young men in prison link vulnerability to expressions of ‘femininity’, such perceptions ultimately fail to recognise how young men can fall into such vulnerable situations and be impacted by their vulnerabilities on a daily basis (Sloan, 2016). This chapter explores the vulnerability of young men in prison. In doing so, it examines how the young men view, resist and respond to the sources of vulnerability which affect their prison experience, through the lens of critical masculinities studies.

Liebling and Maruna (2005: 3), argue that a range of sources of vulnerability impact prisoners, as “fear, anxiety, loneliness, trauma, depression, injustice, powerlessness, violence and uncertainty are all part of the experience of prison life”. Distinctly *visible* sources of vulnerability exist for young men in prison, where experiences of being bullied, self-harm, mental health problems (also invisible) and substance abuse are common. In addition, *invisible* sources of vulnerability such as impact on self-identity, mental health problems, restricted educational opportunities, impact on physique, impact on familial roles (in particular parenthood), and impact on future employment are also present. Both visible and invisible sources of vulnerability become more challenging when the demonstration of emotions is deemed to be a sign of weakness – as has been evidenced to be the case in Hydebank – something that may be preyed upon and perceived to be associated with ‘femininity’. In the context of prison, masculinities become vulnerable when they are threatened or pressurised. This may be because of the need to reaffirm masculine traits in an ultra-masculine prison environment, or from internal self-pressures to act in a certain manner (Sloan, 2016). Prison significantly limits avenues for achieving those masculinities deemed traditional in a wider social context and rarely do expectations of hegemonic masculinity permeate every element of an individual’s living space as they do within the prison environment. However, various avenues

are available in prison for attaining masculinities by emphasising masculine characteristics such as public displays of violence, emotional fortitude or control over the prison's informal economy.

However, even the most stoical prisoner can be vulnerable. Within the Hydebank context, the majority of the sources of vulnerability facing young men were interlinked. Additionally, certain sources of vulnerability contributed significantly, and were even the causes, of other sources of vulnerability. For example, the pains associated with withdrawals from drugs were evident and put prisoners at serious risk of self-harm and suicide (Shaw et al., 2004; The Offender Health Research Network, 2010). While a range of sources of vulnerability affect young men within the institution, it would not be possible to do these all justice within a single thesis³⁵. This chapter therefore focuses on the three sources of vulnerability discussed most frequently by the young men during the primary research, which are: health, both physical and mental; self-harm, including suicide; and drugs, both medical and illicit.

8.2 Health: Physical and mental

This chapter highlights the importance of drawing attention to the various vulnerabilities facing young men within Hydebank. However, it also recognises the wider health and social problems facing young men from lower socio-economic classes, not only within NI, but wider afield. The WHO (1948:1) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Research into prisoners' health has highlighted poor health amongst prisoners (see Marshall et al., 2000; Spencer, 2001; De Viggiani, 2006). Spencer (2001:18) argues that “the seeds of poor health are sown for the majority long before they entered an institution”. There are well-established connections between lower socio-economic classes and poor health prior to imprisonment and the majority of individuals enter prison with pre-existing substance abuse issues and health problems which often contribute to, or are the cause of, offending behaviour (Marshall et al., 2000). Prisoners in general have

35 Furthermore, to explore issues such as mental health in greater detail would have required different ethical approval.

poorer levels of mental and physical health than the wider general population (Department of Health, 2000; Smith, 2000; De Viggiani, 2006), which stem from wider social inequality and disadvantage (Smith, 2000). A range of research highlights that prisoners face health risks associated with inequality and disadvantage, are more likely to resort to drug misuse, disorderly conduct and self-harm (Home Office, 2000; Smith, 2000; De Viggiani, 2006). Building on this interconnection between health and other vulnerabilities such as drug misuse, disorderly behaviour and self-harm, Wacquant (2002: 388) argues that drugs and imprisonment are intertwined into the “fabric and lifecourse of the lower classes”. Liebling (1992; 1999) supports this, adding, that the misuse of drugs and alcohol prior to prison increases the vulnerability of individuals within the prison setting, increasing the chances of suicide and self-harm.

Within the context of Hydebanks, it could be argued that in relation to the WHO (1948) definition of health, the majority of young men were not in good health upon entrance to the prison. According to the CJINI (2016b) report, upon entrance to the prison 13 percent of young men reportedly had a physical health problem and 51 percent reported having a mental health problem. Furthermore, in relation to social well-being, a large number expressed concerns in relation to homelessness, financial worries and suicidal feelings (CJINI, 2016b). While the CJINI (2016b) report found that GP’s could be seen within a reasonable timescale, the inspection found that only 23 percent of the young men believed that the quality of health care was ‘good’, much less than the average UK prison comparator of 55 percent. The CJINI concerns were reiterated in the interviews for the current research with young men in Hydebanks:

The health care is the biggest load of shit so it is, those doctors do fuck all for you... I have went to the doctors a few times with different problems and they have done fuck all like so I just told them to beat it. (Alfred)

Trying to get the doctor down here is like 6 weeks waiting list. You have to request and then an auld 6 weeks later [you’ll be seen] you know. And then to get your teeth done you have to wait a few months like... I had to wait a while like. (Ciaran)

Previous research has highlighted that prisoners have wide ranging and diverse social and health needs, which prison health services rarely have the capabilities of

appropriately addressing (Hughes, 2000; Sim, 2002; Watson et al., 2004; De Viggiani, 2006). In addition, studies such as De Viggiani (2006) have found that health services in prison tend to be catered towards short term solutions to problems rather than longer term more sustainable and prevention-focused health goals. Examples of this are most visible in relation to substance misuse in prison with focus being more on treatment and containment than prevention (De Viggiani, 2006). Some of the young men interviewed in Hydebank complained about the healthcare within the prison:

[What's the health care like?] It is all shit. Sure I was in a car crash a few weeks back and I didn't see anyone until 24 hours after. The day of the car crash I came back and I didn't even want to say anything. I hate being unable to do something. I was only after getting back into the gym and I wanted to still go out working and all, so I was gonna say nothing with the intention of coming back and having a lie down and seeing if I felt any better after a lie down, see if I felt any better after a couple of hours. I came back and I lay down and I couldn't get off the fucking bed. I was face down in the bed and one of the boys on the landing asked me three or four times "do you want me to hit this bell here?" because I was fucking clenching my teeth and everything, it felt like somebody was gripping my spine and fucking just squeezing it and I was like 'nah, nah, nah' and they came in again and I was actually crying. I was lying fucking crying and he says "fuck it I'm hitting the bell here" and he hit the bell... they knew about the car crash like because my boss rang in and said about it... he asked to get the nurse over and nobody came near me for hours. I get medicated at night time for my migraines and she came to the grille and was shouting me and I sent one of the boys up and says tell her I can't move, she needs to come down or do something and she just fucked off so I didn't get my medication either and my head was splitting... it wasn't until one or two the next day that I seen somebody and even at that it was just a talk, I got a couple of fucking paracetamol or something, do you know what I mean, after being in a car crash. (Daniel)

I was looking an outside appointment there... it was to do with down below and I was wanting it sorted for ages and it took me three months, like three months to get an appointment like... it was something to do with my testicle, just a wee ball on it and it took him three months to get me an appointment... what happens if that ball was swelling and swelling and swelling, do you know what I mean. That's why when I got out he gave me that MRI scan and all on them and said you are lucky it is only your spherical shield around your left ball is too big. He says people have come in and it is like that [makes a gesture to suggest it is massive] and they have to slice it open and all fluid coming out and all... see for the medical centre see for stuff like that it is not good like. (Joe)

Characteristics of the idealised hegemonic expression of masculinity within the prisoner society are evident in these interviews. In particular, in Daniel's interview he spoke of repeatedly refusing help for his injury until another young man sought it for him, stating "I didn't even want to say anything. I hate being unable to do something". Thus, conforming to the dominant cultural belief amongst the young men in Hydebank, that men should be in total control and therefore show no signs of weakness. It is also apparent through the incidents discussed that the young men have very critical views of the health support and its availability within the prison.

As mentioned previously, mental health problems affected the majority of the young men in Hydebank and the issue was a significant concern for both young men and staff. This was supported by the CJINI (2016b) report which identified that 63 percent of the young men in Hydebank were suffering from emotional well-being or mental health problems against their 26 percent comparator. These issues were raised by staff in interviews:

Yeah, fuck I'd say maybe 70 percent of people in here, if haven't already, are currently suffering from a mental health problem, or probably will. (Gary)

There is a big mental health issue definitely (in) here. (Prison Support Staff C)

Although mental health was recognised as a significant issue by both staff and young men, support in the area was generally deemed insufficient. This was also highlighted by the CJINI (2016b: 14) report which stated "aspects of mental health provision were inadequate". This was partly due to long waiting times for mental health assessments, which were also discussed by young men in this research:

Put it this way I have been in here three and a half years and I still haven't seen mental health... you have to say to health care about it know what I mean, say to the nurses in our house, but I have been saying to them since I've came in like... They sent me down to the doctor, but I never seen a psychiatrist or anything yet. (Ryan)

Personally, I got neglected for 25 months because I was on remand. That's what they told me. When I first came in, because of my condition, I've got OCD [obsessive compulsive disorder] and I was thinking all this madness... I was thinking about like fucking hurting people and all and I says "I don't know why I am thinking like this I would never do it". I says "I wanna see somebody because I am worried" and he [prison officer on landing]

made a few phone calls or whatever and he came back to me and says “we can’t do nothing for you because you are on remand”. So I done 25 months on remand dealing with my shit by myself... it is a complete breach of my human rights and at the end of the day I could of hurt myself or somebody else, fortunately it didn’t happen like... I still haven’t properly seen anybody. (George)

In addition to long waits to see mental health professionals, the CJINI (2016b) reported that there was: a poor strategic approach to support young men with mental health issues; poor procedures in place for the recording of actions taken to combat complex longer-term problems; and no ‘Listener’ scheme to provide confidential emotional support for young men. ‘Listeners’ schemes train and utilise fellow prisoners to provide support for other young men as an alternative to seeking more formal forms of support (Jewkes and Bennett, 2008). The introduction of such a scheme would be beneficial as, in addition to complaints regarding the length of time it took to receive mental health support, the young men often complained about the quality of care provided. As is evident in the following quotes, some of the young men felt they were not being listened to in terms of their mental health problems:

Pile of shite, they ask you how your days been going. It’s not your day it’s your fucking life you are talking about, know what I mean. You are meant to be talking about your life, but they are asking what you are doing today and what were you doing yesterday and how is it today. Fucking bullshit, know what I mean, get fucking out of my face and get me back to the landing. Pack of balls man. (Adam)

Additionally, a minority of young men felt that at times, due to the increasing drug problem in the prison, the mental health professionals were trying to reduce the amount of medication the young men were receiving because a minority abused prescription medication (this was not identified as a concern by the IMB [2017] or CJINI [2016b] investigations):

I was on 28 tablets a day. Because I came in here (and) because of all the drugs going about the jail and stuff, their idea is as soon as you come up here they start weaning you off everything and they just say you don’t need it, because you can consume them and sell them or whatever... they have just weaned me off nearly everything and they are trying to wean me off my diazepam and I get bad anxiety attacks. Like a few days ago I was in someone’s cell and there was a lot of them in and like I don’t like the crowdedness so I started to panic and it was the voices when they were talking it was getting louder and

louder and I couldn't make it out and I started to like have an anxiety attack and I leaned over the counter and knocked somebody's coffee over and he said "what the fuck are you doing you eejit?" and my fight or flight response, I sunk the head into him [head-butted] and walked out. Know what I mean, and they won't help. (Phillip)

While it is beyond the remit or expertise of this research to investigate the quality of healthcare, the CJINI (2016b) inspection did identify that "for those involved with mental health services, care was generally good". However, concerns were raised in relation to the self-harm and suicide policies within Hydebank, suggesting that they had not improved since the 2013 inspection and that their previous related recommendations had not been met (CJINI, 2016b). This view was largely supported by young men who felt that, rather than prioritising aesthetic improvements, money could be better spent on healthcare support, which they felt was outdated and generic:

I just think, fucking, if there was a wee bit more time and effort put in to each person, and they have to realise everybody is just gonna present a different case, you know you're doing this interview with me and you could do it with ten people and you're gonna get ten different answers. You know so I think they need to maybe take it back to basics and stop spending so much money on everything else. (Gary)

In addition to young men's beliefs that the mental health support was inadequate, there was also a confusion amongst them in relation to who provided mental health support in the prison. A lot of the young men believed Start 360 were the principal providers of mental health support within the institution. However, Start 360's primary role within the institution was to provide mentoring, moral and practical support (Start 360, 2018) with the SEHSCT the principal providers of mental health care within the institution (CJINI, 2016b). Confusion about the system was evident from the interviews with young men and even among some support staff:

Mental health is a big problem in here because there is not enough support for it and the referrals take too long [*In terms of the support is it through the medical centre that you get the support?*] I think you have to go through medical first to get the psychiatrists and all, but I am not too sure [*Whenever I have talked to the young lads about mental health support they often say Start 360? You don't provide that?*] That is what I have heard people saying too, but I am not sure that we do it in here. (Prison Support Staff)

In terms of seeking mental health support, the first port of call for many of the young men was the prison officers. In most circumstances they needed to put requests in through prison officers on the landings to access mental health support. In discussions with the prison staff, they recognised that there was not enough staff training to support them in dealing with issues regarding mental health:

[Would staff be trained in mental health support or how to deal with issues like self-harm?] Not enough, not enough, because you know like if you are a mental health nurse you have trained for three years as a mental health nurse and your training is on-going because mental health changes all the time. Mental Health does not stay the same, treatments change you know and unfortunately we don't have that, we don't have that facility. We have a couple of courses, but it is not nearly enough to address [the mental health issues within the prison], and unfortunately the mental health issues are growing within the prison or within the College. (Prison Officer A)

This sentiment was recognised and shared by the young men:

Did you ever see that thing on TV of your man in Maghaberry?³⁶ See they don't know how to control people like that, know what I mean. They are not trained for that sort of stuff *[The prison officers?]* Aye, they don't know any of that there, they don't know how to control people who are willing to cut their balls and pull their eyes out, know what I mean. They obviously stood back and watched that... Even in here people are cutting themselves flat out and all and they can't do fuck all about it. They don't know what to do. (It's) Not as if they can, they don't know what to do. They just can't understand why people are doing it. (Clinton)

Exploring these sources of vulnerability through the lens of critical studies of masculinities, poor mental and physical health pose threats to autonomy and control over the self, important characteristics of the hegemonic expression of masculinity within the prisoner society (Sloan, 2016). As a result of the threat to control and autonomy, some of the young men neglected or hid any forms of mental or physical vulnerability (as was evident earlier in the section in Daniel's quote "I didn't even want to say anything. I hate being unable to do something"). This is not unique to

36 During the fieldwork period the NI Prison Ombudsman was reviewing the case of Sean Lynch a prisoner in Maghaberry, with severe mental health issues, who blinded himself and severely injured his groin area through self-harm. The case was being closely monitored by the media (see Kearney, 2016).

the Hydebank environment as research conducted with men does indicate they are reluctant to seek support even in times of severe emotional distress (Möller-Leimkühler 2002; Vaswani, 2014). However, these feelings and beliefs were exacerbated within the prison setting. In the environment of Hydebank, where dominant expressions of masculinity were characterised by violence, aggression and dismissal of emotion, a large number of the young men stressed that feelings and emotions could not be shared or discussed out of fear of bullying and victimisation:

Some people would probably laugh at you so they would you know try and make fun of you probably try and make you even worse. (Thomas)

Mental health like you've just got to deal with it yourself. I wouldn't feel comfortable talking to anyone about it... talk to Frank³⁷ not to us. (George)

I have never heard anyone ever talk about it... there has only been one guy that has ever said to me that he is messed up, but never anyone else... it probably is because they are in them groups and they don't want it to be seen in case they get slagged [made fun of] or whatever. (Craig)

As was documented in Chapter 7 cultural norms in the prison revolved around the portrayal of the ability to cope within the institution regardless of whatever hardship was being faced. Even if a prisoner felt that they could not cope they must act like they were, suffering in silence out of the fear of victimisation (also see Woodall, 2007). This was not true for all of the young men; some built strong friendships in prison or had friends from the outside who they knew they could trust. Therefore, the cultural masculine norms could be broken in private, depending with whom:

Fuck it depends, it depends who you are, and I mean that about every single person in this jail. I mean if you are me, fuck, no because most of the boys will probably tell you I need it, again there's lads who fucking really, really, really need it and won't go. (Gary)

The wee lads will back you up with that, they will say "get your head sorted" and all that there, "don't be holding things in" and shit like that. The wee lads would help you out like that, like if they knew somebody was fucking down in the dirt like and they were going to do themselves in like [commit suicide], they are not going to let it happen, know what I

³⁷ 'Talk to Frank' is a confidential drugs advice and support service.

mean. They will be there to support you and they will help you, but it depends who it is too. (Mick)

As is evident in the quotes the young men can sometimes rely on friends for support “but it depends who it is” (Mick). The concerns raised by the CJINI (2016b) inspection about inadequacies with physical and mental health support within Hydebank were reflected in the interviews with the young men in this study. In an institution characterised by discipline, surveillance and control it is unsurprising that young men lack self-esteem, autonomy and empowerment. The impacts of the prison institution contradict the principles of health promotion and pose a barrier to the mental health of young men (Smith, 2000; Woodall, 2007).

8.3 Self-harm and suicide

For individuals entering prison for the first time, the experience of losing control and autonomy can be frightening and humiliating (Cooke et al., 1990). The entrance into the prison setting can cause extreme feelings of despair and desperation (Medlicott, 2001: 9) and as a result self-harm and even suicide can follow (Arnold and Magill, 2000). Liebling (1995: 183) argues that research shows a “clear link between the pain of imprisonment and harm (self-harm or suicide)”. This link is often associated with isolation, feelings of loneliness, poor contact with family and friends and a lack of support (Babiker and Arnold, 2001; Powis, 2002). This section focuses initially on self-harm within the Hydebank context followed with a discussion on suicide.

Difficulties emerge in relation to defining self-harm, as some definitions include acts such as tattooing, substance abuse and smoking (Crighton, 2002; Howard League, 2003). The term ‘self-injury’ is a narrower definition, which includes acts specific to the prison context such as cutting, burning and self-strangulation (Howard League, 2003). However, notwithstanding critiques of the concept of ‘self-harm’, this thesis uses the term as it incorporates the harms witnessed and discussed in the prison setting, and was the term colloquially used by the young men themselves to describe their actions.

Within Hydebank self-harm was recognised as being a serious problem facing young men by both the prisoners and the staff. The CJINI (2016b: 24) stated that

“the case management of those at risk of self-harm through the SPAR documents had improved since the last inspection but issues remained about their quality and completeness”. Their inspection identified 57 incidents of self-harm in the six months prior to the inspection. This was, on average, approximately the same rate as the period prior to the CJINI (2013) inspection of 1.16 incidents per prisoner per annum. This is significant in comparison to the same demographic of prisoners in England and Wales, where there were 8,397 incidents of self-harm in 2016 amongst adult men aged 18-24 (MoJ, 2017). The prison population for this age group was around 14, 821, again in 2016 (Allen and Watson, 2017), which equates to 0.57 incidents of self-harm per prisoner per annum. Although there are some differences in population, which may result in a higher rate within NI (a smaller prisoner population may be more affected by a high number of incidents by one or two prisoners) it still points to a significant problem, which evidently has not been addressed since the CJINI (2013) inspection.

Studies such as Harvey (2007) have focused specifically on self-harm amongst young men in the prison context. He identified four principal signifiers for self-harm in prison: firstly, to relieve tension, stress or anger, thus providing feelings of calmness and control (also see Arnold and Magill, 2000; Cooke et al, 1990). Secondly, the presence of psychological health difficulties, such as depression, psychosis or traumatic memories (also see Dear et al., 2001; Ivanoff et al., 1996). Thirdly, experiences of extreme entry shock, the problems associated with adjusting to prison life such as loss of autonomy, missing family or coming off drugs (also see HMPS, 2001; 2005; National Centre for Policing Excellence, 2006; Shaw et al, 2003); and finally, as a response to a triggering event, such as missing a significant event on the outside or after a conflict within the prison (also see Blaauw et al., 1998; Tartaro and Lester, 2009). Other similar studies exploring young men and experiences of self-harm in prison, including Livingston (1997) and Inch et al. (1995), found that bullying was one of the biggest contributors to self-harm and suicide (Livingston, 1997; Inch et al., 1995). As these range of studies identify, there is not one principal signifier for self-harm, it differs for each individual and is usually caused by a number of significant factors and/or events (Babiker and Arnold, 2001; McCarthy, 2003).

Within the Hydebank context, self-harm was often cited as a method of coping with the rigours of imprisonment. This is in line with the findings of Jones (2007) who found that self-harm provided young men with a means of forgetting their problems, calming them down, blocking everything out and coping with stress (also see Haines et al, 1995; HMIP, 1999). The young men in Hydebank spoke of the relief and release self-harm provided in relation to coping with prison:

It releases everything from you man, it's just like breathing out smoke whenever you smoke. Like if you smoke a roll-up, breathing it in and then letting it all out, once you cut you let it all out, it's lethal [amazing]... as soon as I cut and I see the blood coming out I know everything is alright... see whenever you feel like that you are just doing it you know what I mean that's it, that's just your way of coping and that's it. (Adam)

I don't know how to explain it, it's when you cut and you see the blood it is like a rush and it is like a drug, it is like when you take a drug you just stop thinking about everything else. That's the same reason why people cut [*Like addicted to it?*] Aye well I wouldn't go as far as to say addicted to it, it is just a distraction. (Martin)

Self-harm would be a major issue... Not always, but a lot of them, I find, use it as a coping mechanism and also as a learnt behaviour as well. They see their mate doing it and maybe getting a bit of attention so now they are doing it and then it just seems to spread. We went through a wee patch there where the whole jail seemed to be self-harming, but it goes in wee cycles you know... Their sister done it, their mother done it, their dad done it, you know, this was all ways of them learning to cope and cope in here... when they are getting off the drugs, maybe they are not getting out of their cell as often because there is not enough staff on the ground, so they are locked maybe a bit more than normal, you will find they will cut and that can either be for to cope, because they are not happy that they are locked, or to get attention, because they are locked and they want to get out of their cell for a while. I have had that as well, it just depends on the person and how they cope with it. (Prison Support Staff B)

As expressed by Adam, self-harm for some young men is a method of coping within prison, it “releases everything from you”, a method of ensuring stresses and worries are “let out”. The young men, who talked about self-harm, often spoke of a ‘release’, usually in terms of tension, frustration and anger. Self-harm for some young men can be a means of self-medication, used to treat emotions of fear, anxiety, guilt, shame and desperation (Arnold and Magill, 2000). Self-harm can be used to relieve these pains, potentially providing a protective function turning them away from

suicide (Babiker and Arnold, 2001; Morton, 2004). This belief is supported by Howard League (2001: 5) who state that “for many prisoners, self-harm is a way of surviving the depression, frustration and powerlessness of being incarcerated. For these people, the motivation is usually a desire to stay alive rather than an urge to die”. Some researchers regard it as a means of self-help (Favazza, 1996: xix) a way of experiencing physical pain instead of psychological pain (Snow, 2002). It is evident throughout the quotations and literature that self-harm can be used by young men to cope with the rigours of imprisonment. It also can be used as a means of providing alternatives to feeling psychological pain, an alternate avenue to substance misuse (Snow, 2002; Morton, 2004) and suicide (Babiker and Arnold, 2001; Howard League, 2001; Morton, 2004). This was also supported by the young men in Hydebank who admitted at times it was used as a method of avoiding alternate behaviours, such as violence:

[I] actually quite recently self-harmed... it was a one off for me really. I mean my wee sister, a few years ago, I really, really got upset with her, you know for self-harming and you know she made me hold out my hands and said to me, “like your knuckles are all lumped up and out of place and that’s how you cope when you’re upset or your angry, you break stuff or punch stuff” and I says, “fuck well you know, what’s your point” and she says “well this is how I stop myself from hurting”... someone the other night on the landing made a stupid remark about parenting and I kind of lost it [*Did you then get in a fight with them or anything?*] I feel like hurting myself, prevented me hurting him, I’ll be honest with you [*If you had of started a fight in here you would have been back-housed?*] Yeah I probably would have been to the block and then back to Beech. (Gary)

Young men in Hydebank, as evidenced in previous chapters, often adhere to expressions of masculinity which reject any form of weakness or emotion. As a result, the avenues open to them for expressing emotions are limited and acts such as public displays of violence become viable options for expressing emotion. However, these acts, if witnessed by prison staff, can result in severe repercussions, such as being sent to the block and/or being ‘back-housed’, resulting in less association time, reduced visits and fewer privileges. The conundrum, as highlighted in the quotation from Gary, is that this young man feels his only two viable options

for expressing his emotions are violent altercations or self-harm³⁸, “I feel like hurting myself, prevented me hurting him”. Exploring this through a profeminist lens, it was apparent that there was not enough support or focus on challenging these perceptions amongst young men in Hydebank. The damaging perception that men should display strength, power and emotional fortitude has been historically damaging to women and instrumental in the sustainment and support of patriarchy. From a profeminist perspective it must be argued that men’s gendered identities are political sites which should be challenged accordingly, regardless of the environment.

Again referring to Gary’s quote, the inter-relation between sources of vulnerability is apparent here, some of the young men, including Gary, spoke about being monitored in relation to their behaviour. The necessity of remaining focused and self-controlled in the aim of progressing through the system or also in relation to being considered for outside work, home leaves and early release makes their prisoner status vulnerable (Sloan, 2016). Using Gary as an example, as opposed to violently attacking his insulter, he self-harmed to protect his status as an enhanced prisoner. Other sources of vulnerability which related to the prisoner status were visible and discussed frequently amongst the young men, such as delays in court proceedings, changing lawyers, availability of bail and injustice, for those who maintained innocence. These sources of vulnerability caused stress, anxiety and uncertainty, alongside many sleepless nights for young men in Hydebank.

Another element of the use of self-harm in Hydebank was control. Self-harm in prison can provide individuals with feelings of control over themselves and their identity when confronted by a loss of autonomy (Cooke et al, 1990; Favazza, 1996; Arnold and Magill, 2000). Self-harm can be used as an attempt to gain control over a circumstance or an environment during feelings of powerlessness and absence of control (Arnold and Magill, 2000). This was evident in the interview with Gary as already discussed, but also other interviews with the young men:

38 Another potential factor in this was the identity of the researcher. As the researcher was a young man himself Gary could have potentially been reluctant to explicitly share his vulnerabilities with the researcher. Instead, portraying a violent expression of masculinity in line with the cultural beliefs held by many of the young men held in Hydebank (also see Crewe, 2014).

It was the smell of blood for me, people say it is the sight of blood or how big the cut is, but it's the smell of blood. You know I can smell blood, it's like the iron or something. It's just like I always used to smell it, I used to smell my arm after it, it was weird. (Adam)

In this circumstance, self-harm is an act of exerting control over one's body (Home Office, 1999). Adam's interview highlights how the individual has the power and control to extract blood whenever they wish. Continuing with the theme of control, there was a perception that self-harm was used by young men as a form of 'manipulation' over their situation and the prison staff. This perception has been discussed in previous prison research, Liebling and Krarup (1993: 100) found that some prisoners attempted suicide with "strategic" motivation in order to co-ordinate a change in location. Harvey (2007) identified how young men in prison admitted self-harming for 'strategic' purposes, such as to avoid being transferred to another prison. Although the young men in Hydebank were not using self-harm as a 'strategic' means in relation to moving location, the perception that it was a form of 'manipulation' within the prison was common. There was a belief from both other prisoners and members of staff that young men used self-harm to regain access to TVs and radios, but also smaller items such as to get flasks filled with hot water. The young men and the staff shared these perceptions and indeed some young men admitted to using self-harm 'strategically':

Fucking cutting yourself [points to arm which is badly scarred]... I done that in here, I never had one of them [cuts] on me arm until I came in here. That's been drugs, I've only done that when I have been on drugs [*And why do you do it?*] Just stupid things like not getting hot water in flasks... like not getting out for phone calls or being locked early and the drugs just make you not think, when you are taking tablets you just don't think about things... the self-harm you're not doing that to hurt yourself or to release any pain you are just doing it. Because you say to the officers like "right if you don't get me this I am going to cut myself" and then they are saying "aye you don't have the balls" [*The officers say that?*] Aye and then they are saying "aw sure hit the bell when you have hung yourself" and all, you wanna see the stuff they say, "aye we'll deal with it when it happens". (Markus)

It can be seen as a manipulation of regime and being able to get things. Because a lot of them, a lot of young people, don't like the word 'no' and they will (say) "give me my TV back or I am going to cut", "give me this or I am going to cut"... and it is a learned behaviour unfortunately... It starts off as one thing you know maybe trying to manipulate,

but then unfortunately it is the learnt behaviour that they get that effect or release or whatever so that is then how self-harm then progresses. (Prison Officer A, staff)

However, while some of the young men in Hydebank may have claimed to be using self-harm ‘strategically’, research in the area suggests that for most self-harmers intrapersonal aims, such as the relief of stress, far outweigh interpersonal aims, such as manipulation (Walsh, 2006). Indeed, when considering that self-harm may be a ‘manipulative’ behaviour, mental health professionals suggest it is important not to overlook the strong connections between self-harm and stress (Dehart et al., 2009). Bearing this in mind, alongside the cultural discourse amongst young men within Hydebank – which coupled the display of emotion with weakness, in accordance with the hegemonic ideal – it is plausible that the young men were claiming to use self-harm ‘strategically’ in order to ‘save face’ (see Goffman, 1955; 1959) and not admit the underlying issues behind their actions. Furthermore, the dominant belief that self-harm was a form of ‘manipulative’ behaviour, especially when individuals self-harmed regularly with no intentions of suicide can have a range of negative results. Notably, it can result in a misperception as to why young men self-harm, creating a lack of understanding and sympathy, as was evident in the interviews:

(Self-harm) is very much, I think, a lot of it now is attention seeking like. Because you know when someone is intentionally, (and) I have seen guys intentionally trying to kill themselves, like the way they were cutting like they were going deep. But you see a lot of guys with only scratches on them like, and it is all just (an) attention thing. Because say if they are on a basic regime and they don’t have a TV, automatically if they cut themselves [clicks fingers] TV, have to be given a TV. Because again it becomes for their own personal safety, a disciplinary sort of thing so that is what they will do like. (Gerard)

Some people just do it because they want out of their cells or because they need something they don’t give a fuck. I think anyone who does that you just need to throw them in a cell and go and punch the fuck out of them and tell them to wise up. Hit them a big slap. (Aaron)

Cunts cut themselves flat out in here, you see their hands, fuck that, no way I couldn’t think of that there like [*Why do people do it?*] I don’t know trying to get tablets off the doctor or something. I don’t know, fuck... the amount of people in here with their hands cut and their arms, everywhere cut. I don’t know like, I don’t know what is wrong with them like, they are not right like, it must be for attention like. Because if you are going to do something, do yourself right. It is only wee nicks you know, there is some real bad

ones, but like I don't know... you have your days too like, but I'm not too bad, I just go and try and sleep early if it happens. (Ciaran)

Additionally, the perception that self-harm is a form of 'manipulation' can also result in the neglect of the needs and vulnerability of the victim; subsequently, impacting the nature and speed of staff intervention (Liebling, 2007). This is supported by research in the area which suggests that prison staff perceptions that self-harm is 'manipulative' can result in "a process of *"hardening"* and *"distancing"* themselves from those in their care" (Howard League and Centre for Mental Health, 2017: 3). It is important to recognise that self-harm within prison can become a method of communicating with staff and relevant support groups their needs and feelings when they can see no other way of conveying to them their stresses. This then can become a new learnt behaviour adopted in prison as a coping strategy (Howard League, 2003; Morton, 2004). In this regard, individuals may need to speak to a member of staff individually and may not find another method of gaining this communication plausible. As a result, self-harm as a means of communication has impacted perceptions of self-harm, particularly within the prison environment, where it is often considered to be a 'manipulative' behaviour. However, it is better to view self-harm as an intrapersonal approach to dealing with problems as opposed to an interpersonal one. It is an act committed to achieve the desired effects for an individual, as opposed to its effects on others (Spandler, 2001).

Furthermore, self-harm within prison can be a means of expressing agency within the prison setting. Agency is a central characteristic of normative expressions of masculinity (Bandyopadhyay, 2006; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). It is "tightly restricted and denied within prisons" (Moore and Scraton, 2014: 36), however within the prison setting the body can become a site of difference. It can be utilised as a tool to present a statement of presence, control and power; and also is a tool for presenting self-control and agency (Jewkes, 2005). Indeed, within the prison setting self-harm and suicide can have been viewed as acts of resistance, utilised to assert agency over the body and self (Liebling and Krarup, 1993).

In relation to suicide, throughout the fieldwork period there were thankfully no incidents within the institution. In addition, in the five years prior to submission of this thesis (between 2012-2017) there were no cases "where a coroner's inquest has

been completed, with a finding of suicide as the cause of death” (NIPS, 2017b: 3). Prior to this five-year period, there were a series of suicides within Hydebank. The investigation into the death of Allyn Baxter (aged 19) (2010) in Hydebank deserves particular attention. Baxter, imprisoned for fine-default, was locked for 22 hours a day for the three days he was in Hydebank due to ‘staffing issues’. Despite a history of drug and alcohol abuse and self-harm, he was not placed on SPAR (Supporting Prisoners at Risk) and his GP was not contacted. Baxter hung himself and despite staff finding him, he later died in hospital. The investigation into his death documented serious problems for prisoners in Hydebank including extensive lockdown periods for vulnerable prisoners, restriction of medication, inadequate monitoring and recording of incidents and poor communication between health-care staff and prison staff (Prisoner Ombudsman for NI, 2011). Some of the longer sentenced prisoners spoke of their experiences of young men killing themselves in custody:

I have seen people cutting off their ears and all in here, I have seen people slicing themselves in the ablutions and the blood squirting because they have cut arteries and all [*They done it in front of you?*] Aye they have done it right in front of me [*What did you do?*] The wee lad has a blade and he wants to cut himself what the fuck are you meant to do there, some people would just, if you went near them quick enough, would shiv [stab] you with it [*Has there been any deaths since you have been in here?*] Aye there has been three or four people hung themselves. (Martin)

A kid could be lying in that cell hanging... it happened whenever I was on E2 and your wee man done himself in on E1... Your man [prison officer] looked and went “oh fuck” [*Did they save him?*] No they didn’t. He was dead... Crazy. A wee girl done it that night too, over in Ash, there was three in the one night. They caught your other wee man and the only reason they caught your other wee man over in Beech was because the ambulance was already in here getting the other wee man. If the ambulance wasn’t already in here he would have been fucking dead, they resuscitated him and brought him back around³⁹. (Mick)

39 This refers to the deaths of Frances McKeown and Samuel Carson, see McCullough (2016): <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/night-of-jail-death-most-traumatic-of-career-former-governor-tells-inquest-that-two-prisoners-committed-suicide-and-one-attempted-35112944.html>

My mate cut himself about 12 times next door to me one night and we all hit the emergency bell and it took them about 10 or 15 minutes to come up [*So you have obviously witnessed it first-hand then?*] Yeah, there's been boys taken their own lives when I've been in here [*How many?*] Fuck three or four that I can remember like... hung themselves. (Aaron)

Reiterating the CJINI (2016b) inspection findings, the young men imprisoned in Hydebank felt there was a distinct lack of support for them in relation to self-harm and suicide. Some of the earlier quotes discussed in this section referred to an unwillingness to discuss or seek help for self-harm or suicidal issues. Although it is unwise to make comparisons between male and female prison populations in relation to suicide, as they are not equivalent in terms of size and demographic (Liebling, 2007), it is worthy considering gender in relation to suicide at a wider level. The Samaritans (2012: 1, cited in Sloan, 2016: 140) report that men in the UK are three times more likely to commit suicide and state that:

Masculinity – the way men are brought up to behave and the roles, attributes and behaviours that society expects of them – contributes to suicide in men. Men compare themselves against a masculine 'gold standard' which prizes power, control and invincibility. When men believe they are not meeting this standard, they feel a sense of shame and defeat. Having a job and being able to provide for your family is central to 'being a man' particularly for working-class men. Masculinity is associated with control, but when men are depressed or in crisis, they can feel out of control. This can propel some men towards suicidal behaviour as a way of regaining control.

Although there were no incidents of suicide within Hydebank during the study, there was one incident post-prison, where one of the young men tragically took his own life within the first week of release. The young man had completed an interview for this thesis before his release. In the interview he discussed his need for support for mental health, in particular depression. He stated that the support had been taken away from him within Hydebank, even though he felt that he needed it:

Aye, but see with the doctors and my medication and all they are a nightmare [*Why what sort of mental health problems would you say you have?*] Depression [*And is that from before you came in?*] Yeah, way before [*And you have obviously got that diagnosed then?*] Yeah, it dragged on and dragged on and it was bad in here like because I was coming off all the drugs and stuff so it was a nightmare [*What sort of support is there?*] Well I was speaking to psychiatrists and all and been going to the doctor and stuff [*And*

how often was that?] Well they stopped that there about two weeks ago *[How come?]* They said I didn't need the help, but sure that's up to them. Even though I do need the help like. I have made another appointment to speak to the doctor.

Within the first year of release from prison it has been suggested that men are eight times more likely to die by suicide than men in the general population (Pratt et al., 2006; Carlton and Segrave, 2011). While analysing the support provided for young men within the community goes beyond the realms of this thesis it is evident that this young man felt he was not being given adequate support within Hydebanks. Despite there not being any suicides in Hydebanks for the last number of years, this post-prison suicide should serve as a stark reminder to the institution of the serious problems many of these young men are facing and the need for improved support in the area and for support in the community. Alongside issues regarding health and self-harm, there was an evident drug problem within Hydebanks. Issues relating to this are discussed in the next section.

8.4 Drugs

Fuck yeah, everybody knows there's drugs in jails. Fuck it's just the way things are now; you know what I mean. Years ago it was probably booze, but now, fuck yeah there's drugs in Hydebanks. Have I had any experiences of it? Yeah, I've had people fucking drop from legal highs in front of me, to people overdosing on tablets, fucking everything, I've seen it all. A very, very, very good friend of mine, a childhood friend, fucking died last year from those legal highs. (Gary)

Drugs permeate the prisoner society and contribute to the construction of masculinities within. Indeed, it is impossible to understand the experiences of young men in prison without an understanding of the "role of drugs in penal culture, personal biography and criminal history" (Crewe, 2009: 459). The discussion of drugs was a key topic of conversation within Hydebanks and repeatedly identified as a significant problem facing young men, both as an individualised problem, but also in contribution to the social dynamic within the institution. This was supported by the CJINI (2016b: 30) inspection which stated that Hydebanks' "strategic approach to drugs and alcohol, including supply reduction, remained inadequate", although 58 percent of prisoners CJINI (2016b) surveyed said they had a problem with drugs.

Drugs usage was viewed as an inevitable part of life within the prison by both staff and prisoners alike. In interviews, when asked what the main problems facing young men in Hydebank where, the majority of participants' –prisoners and staff – first response was drugs:

[What would you say the main problems facing young men in Hydebank are?]

- Number one is drugs. (Craig)
- The drugs is a big problem to tell you the truth. (Henry)
- Probably addiction. (Alfred)
- The biggest problem all round has got to be with drugs I think, drugs is a big, big thing. (Prison Support Staff C)
- Drugs. Drugs is a major, major issue here, mental health yes, but to me the drugs would be paramount. (Prison Support Staff B)

In terms of the variety of drugs available in the prison, heroin was viewed as the lowest of the low and mostly condemned in rhetoric amongst the young men. The young men labelled heroin users 'junkies' or 'smackheads'. None of the young men who participated in the study, in either observations or interviews, admitted using the drug at any stage in their life. There were some reports that young men had seen it in the institution in the past, but it was most definitely a rarity. As Gary stated, "this prison heroin no, Maghaberry yes". Otherwise, most other illicit drugs appeared to be available including cocaine, ecstasy and cannabis. Surprisingly, cocaine, which according to the young men could cost over £100 per gram, was extremely popular within the prison. The popularity of cocaine was also uncovered by a prisoner survey conducted by Start 360, as discussed by Prison Support Staff A, "it's wild the amount of coke that is in this jail. That has came out of the surveys. There is a load of coke". Building upon the popularity of cocaine, cannabis was also extremely popular:

Fuck yeah like grass and dope are a common occurrence in here, like if you ask me do I have any today and I'll tell you yes, if I say no tomorrow, the boy next to me will have some. Fuck it's in here, it's flooded. (Gary)

Following cocaine and cannabis, medicinal drugs, both prescribed and unsubscribed, were commonly misused:

I collapsed and died twice at the courts last night. They had to get a defibrillator to bring me back to life for fuck sake... I put a morphine patch on my arm and when I thought it was wearing off I sucked it until I thought there was none left and then put the patch in my tea to get the last wee bit and then when I was finishing my tea just necked it [swallowed in one go, including the patch] fuck sake. (Jack)

Our five key sort of [abused] drugs would be Pregabalin which is Lyrica, Diazepam, Tramadol, Triptorelin, Kadian those are the main, main ones, Co-codomol quickly follows as well. (Prison Support Staff B)

Finally, legal highs or psychoactive drugs were also common in the prison:

If you can't get grass then that herbal shit is just a poor man's weed, that's what I call it, a poor man's weed. They all smoke that and they are dropping like flies, intensive care and all that shit. (Phillip)

As demonstrated by Phillip legal highs such as 'herbal', also known as 'spice', were common within Hydebank⁴⁰. Research identifies that, from a psychopharmacological viewpoint, individuals taking illicit substances, such as 'herbal' and other stimulants, in prison can become aggressive, agitated, excitable, irrational and even violent. They can exacerbate existing psychopathological and social problems, increase the risk of psychotic episodes and paranoia (Wheatley et al., 2015) and can have unpredictable and life-threatening effects (CJINI, 2016b: 18). However, regardless of the health dangers associated with 'legal highs' some of the young men spoke about using some psychoactive substances within Hydebank 'strategically' as they did not show up on drugs tests:

40 There has been an increase in the use of psychoactive drugs, not only in prisons, but also in society, in the last number of years. A psychoactive substance, otherwise known as 'legal highs' is a drug or chemical that when taken impacts the central nervous system effecting temporarily consciousness, perception, mood and behaviour. 'Legal highs' were legal up until 2016, however there is now a blanket ban on the drugs under the Psychoactive Substances Act, 2016 (many still refer to the substances as 'legal highs' although they are in fact illegal) (Wadsworth et al., 2017). These psychoactive substances are essentially drugs made from patented substances and designed to replicate the feelings and effects of illegal drugs (CJINI, 2016b). Over 300 psychoactive substances have been identified by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2013). One of the most prominent of the new drugs is synthetic cannabis, referred to above as 'Spice' or 'Herbal', which replicates the effect of cannabis. This is commonly used in prisons throughout the UK, however the substance can have psychedelic effect.

Legal highs is probably one of the biggest issues, because prescription drugs show up on a drugs test and if you fail a drugs test you go to adjudication (and) a lot of negative things can happen. Whereas legal highs actually don't show up on drugs tests. So it is sort of dangerous. Guys would smoke legal highs as cannabis substitutes to get the same hit as cannabis, but it is much worse, they are going around like absolute zombies... but you know I honestly don't think punishing people for smoking cannabis is worthwhile in jail, because if they know if they take legal highs they are not going to get punished they are automatically going to take the more dangerous route because... they are thinking about their consequences to their life in jail. But they are not thinking about consequences to their health... if they get caught with it in their possession yes they are getting charged, that is an illicit substance, it is an illegal substance in here, but if they are smoking it for weeks and weeks and weeks and they get called down for a urine drug test it does not show up on the tests. But, if you smoke cannabis and I think it is 28 days it can stay in your system, if you take diazepam 28 days. (Gerard)

Building on the discussion regarding the vulnerability of prisoner status in Section 8.3., the use of drugs to 'pass' or 'fill' time when caught often meant a reduction in regime. A reduction in regime was a tool used by the institution to punish and control inmate behaviour. Therefore, for prisoners the use of illegal drugs that could be detected through testing, increased the vulnerability of their prisoner status. As a result, to avoid jeopardising their prisoner status the young men claimed to take 'legal highs' as they did not show up on drugs tests; subsequently, protecting their prisoner status. Therefore, in a strategic manner, the young men risked taking 'legal highs' to protect their status. However, Buntman (2003: 237 cited in Crewe, 2009) characterises resistance as "actions and practices designed to dilute, circumvent, or eliminate the imposition of unwelcome power". Through the exploration of the young men's strategic use of psychoactive drugs as a form of resistance, it is evident that the young men are expressing agency over their situation. Indeed, Jewkes (2002: 38) argues resistance is an active strategy requiring insight into structural constraints, "the violation of a rule does not in itself constitute resistance" it can only be regarded as resistance if the individual "sees through the institutional ideology and knowingly acts on this basis" (Jewkes, 2002: 38). Within the context of Hydebank the young men recognise that psychoactive drugs are illicit substances, however the prison does not have the mechanisms in place to detect their use. Therefore, some of the young men strategically utilise psychoactive drugs to resist the system, in the

process reaffirming their masculinities, by providing them with some form of agency, power and control over their situation.

Many of the young men subsequently disagreed with punishment for having addiction problems and were concerned about the increasing amount of young men taking ‘legal highs’ as a strategic approach to passing drugs tests because of the health risks associated with them:

Why are people getting punished for having a disease or an addiction? Why are people getting punished instead of helped? That’s not helping, that’s just making them worse. That is filling them with fucking hate. They [the prison] haven’t a clue... I’ve felt it, I know it doesn’t do anybody any good, you shouldn’t get punished for something that’s wrong with you, for something that you can’t help... instead you get locked behind your door, your loss of fucking association or whatever else, or your TV took off you, back housed somewhere fucking stinking. That’s not helping you at all, it’s making you worse. That’s where I think a big part of this place fails like, there is no rehabilitation whatsoever from in here, you have to do it all yourself. (Aaron)

One day you will be 100 percent, and like this is through first-hand experience, not one drug on your mind. Wouldn’t even think about smoking a joint and then wake up the next day and someone’s done something deliberately to piss you off and you’re like what the fuck do I do here, do I kick off or what do I do with myself. I can’t go talk to anybody because it’s set appointments. You can’t just say I need to speak to this (support group), can you get them to come see me, it’s all set appointments. You can’t see them that day. Then you wake up the next morning stressed to the max and all you can do is have a smoke [of cannabis] and lock yourself you know. And then they hammer you, they don’t see your point of view, you’re sitting there saying “is there nothing you can do?”, “I haven’t slept for 4 days”. Instead of taking sleepers off people, because that is just as bad because you fail a drug test on them. So there’s nothing else to do and you take a smoke and they hammer you, “here there’s 5 days in the block (and you) lose your association for 20 days”. You’re just trying to sort yourself out and they’re slamming, slamming. All them kids are doing is getting up at 10.30 and being slammed straight back to Standard 1... Let the lads smoke at night-time and get some sleep and stop forcing them onto other things because they’re scared of getting their TVs taken off them or going to the block. (Brendy)

A wide range of issues regarding vulnerability are raised in these quotations: firstly, the criminalisation and punishment of addiction often exacerbates the problems facing addicts, as highlighted by Aaron, it is “just making them worse”. Young men

caught taking illegal drugs may be locked in their cell longer, lose association time, lose enhancement privileges and lose electronic devices which may help pass time. As a result, young men often find themselves situated in a vicious cycle of drug use and punishment. Secondly, young men are using drugs as a method of coping because they feel that the support within the institution is inadequate. Finally, the young men possess feel vulnerable in terms of their prisoner status – and subsequent level of enhancement – and addiction problems, forcing them to take drugs which may place them at a health risk in order to preserve the limited amenities and benefits they have.

Problems with drugs created further problems for young men who were trying to progress through the system or were trying to prove positive behaviour to prison authorities with the aim of getting early release, home-leave or outside work. Temptations posed a real threat to their reputation, making their prisoner status vulnerable. Despite their attempts to desist from substance use, former addicts' resilience and recovery was constantly threatened. The ease at which drugs could be accessed and often taken in front of young men when they were trying to resist further threatened the strength of will as "It's hard to stop taking drugs whenever they are always there" (Markus).

In combating feelings of vulnerability, drugs, in particular cannabis – in the same way as self-harm – became a method of coping for some of the young men in Hydebank. This was evidenced in Brendy's interview "you wake up the next morning stressed to the max and all you can do is have a smoke". Drug use in prison can be used as a means for prisoners to avoid or escape their problems such as the use of cannabis to relieve stress, relax, help sleep or pass time (Cope, 2003; Crewe, 2009). This was evident in the interviews:

[Why do you think people would take drugs in here?]

- Fuck it's a coping mechanism isn't it you know it's trying to be normal again. (Gary)
- It sort of just eases your mind of a wee bit. It takes your mind of things for the worst. (Tony)
- Just make you feel, I don't know if they make you feel better like, but they make you feel good... they make time go in. (Markus)

- Their fucking head's melted sometimes, people's families probably not coming up visiting them, they have no-one, know what I mean. So they have nothing else to do but take drugs. (Dermy)

As is evident from the quotes, drug use in Hydebank was a way of helping young men to cope with the rigours of imprisonment and deal with feelings of isolation and loneliness. Upsettingly, they may not make young men “feel better” (Markus), but it is a method of making them feel “normal again” (Gary). In addition to drugs being used as a coping strategy, they were also used to “make time go in” (Markus). Within Hydebank drugs were deemed a valid method of passing time. The young men spoke of periods of the day where time stood still and was more vividly felt. For example, during periods of lock-up or significant events in the calendar, such as Christmas. During periods of lock-up young men often spoke about being left alone with their thoughts and the inability to do anything about them. In a similar vein to the use of self-harm, control and agency are central characteristics to normative expressions of masculinity (Bandyopadhyay, 2006; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). Whether drugs were utilised to help young men cope with the deprivations of imprisonment or as a method of reasserting control over time, they were a method for young men to reclaim some feelings of agency, control and masculinity:

Ecstasy and stuff... they're for big occasions, like Christmas when we're unlocked for like two days. Fuck me, see after five hours of sitting listening to the same shite, if you have the chance to go to your cell and fucking wire an E in till you, you're gonna do it. Because if you've to listen to him [another prisoner] for another five minutes your gonna knock him fucking stinking with one of them [snooker] cues. You know Christmas and big occasions (like) that are gonna melt people's heads... The last time I took an E myself would have been Halloween last year... you know fucking it's something to keep the flow because you will, eventually if there is nothing, you will end up killing each other. (Gary)

It can pass time, it could make each day a wee bit better, know what I mean, it can make everything you are doing in jail a bit more fun... like you have too much time to think, drugs take the thinking away. See when you are in jail you have far too much time to think, far too much time, because that is all you do. Everything you do you are thinking in the back of your head, know what I mean. Like now I am sitting here with you and I am thinking about other stuff, like I'll be sitting in class thinking about other stuff, same sitting on the landing, but see once you lock in your room that is it, you are stuck, just you and your thoughts so some people take drugs to get that away, because then if you have like long time to do, like if you have a load of years, you don't want to be sitting every night

thinking about stuff outside. Drugs help with that sometimes, all right some people sit there and occupy themselves, but sometimes you are not able to [*What would you be thinking about?*] You'd be thinking about your mummy, your daddy, your brothers, sisters that's mainly what I be thinking about and then you would be thinking about the things that got you here, all stuff like that. And then you have people that have kids, families and all outside know what I mean... then in here obviously people die and all while you are in here so that there could tip people over the edge as well. You could lose friends, you could lose family members and then you hear about that and then you have to lock in a cell that day, know what I mean, it can be hard not to take drugs... it clears your mind. Aye, okay maybe not for a long time, but for that short time that's what you need it for. (Martin)

Research exploring drug use in prison has argued that drugs offer prisoners a “mindscape” where prisoners use drugs to “slip away from reality” (Cohen and Taylor, 1976: 129). As identified by Martin, “if you have a load of years” to do drugs can be a common technique to cope with and take some form of control over the large amount of unstructured time within prison. In particular, hallucinogenics have the impact of mentally removing individuals from the physical environment and readjusting their perceptions of time, making it pass or even jump more seamlessly (Matthews, 1999). The use of drugs allows some prisoners to express some agency over time, providing them with something to do whilst locked in cell. However, many prisoners' habits commence within the community where drugs provide users with an escape from physical space and feelings of structural inequality (McAuley, 2000). Additionally, a lot of prisoners struggle with substance addictions, inevitably addiction reduces the degree of autonomy held by an individual over themselves and their environment (Caplan, 2006). In terms of the young men in Hydebank, drug use seemed to be more popular at night-time, in the same vein as Cope's (2003) research, association periods at night often had less staff than at education or workshops so that meant there was lower risk of getting caught, “like if you want a smoke of green you have to wait until lock up or something know what I mean because you don't want to get caught with that” (Stuart). As identified in the quotes, at night feelings of isolation were also at the highest, thus drugs were used as a method of combating this and expressing some degree of control and agency over their situation.

One issue associated with drugs within the institution was their contribution to the informal market. This in turn, subsequently contributed to outlays of debt, bullying and victimisation. In correlation with the informal market, and despite

individuals' motivations for involvement in it, drugs were inherently linked with concepts of hegemony. As discussed in Chapter 6, the idealised hegemonic expressions of masculinity within the prisoner society in Hydebank were characterised by solidarity and a 'code of silence' which were fundamental requirements for the informal market's survival. Indeed, the connection between drugs, the informal economy and victimisation was clear:

There is people that get themselves into debts and then they get bate [beaten up] and all you know... then if people has stuff and all and a few other people knew they might go and try and take it off them people, fucking over there [points to Beech] (they) went into their fucking hole⁴¹... trying to get a fucking hit or something, know what I mean, not wise. (Ciaran)

If someone hears they've got drugs in, two or three of them will go in with gloves on and hold them down and stick their fingers up their hole and take them. (Ciaran)

Ciaran's quotes clearly identify serious bullying and victimisation within the prison, initially in the form of theft, but secondly through serious sexual assault. Drugs were a source of bullying and victimisation within the institution, those in debt could be pressured into being asked to traffic drugs or other illicit items into the prison or be exploited into taking other risks (not uncommon in other prison research [see De Viggiani, 2012]). The connection between the informal economy and feelings of power have been discussed in detail in Chapter 6, however it is worth identifying power relationships in relation to drugs and vulnerability. Those in control of the distribution of drugs were provided with feelings of power amongst the prisoner society. In terms of vulnerability, some young men were placed in a position of subordination because of the accrual of debt. As mentioned previously those in debt could be pressured into committing various acts of benefit to those in control of the illicit economy. Indeed, debt was discussed by a lot of the young men in relation to drugs and victimisation:

There is people in here with no money and they get into some debt like, and it sticks, the debt sticks with you, so it is not good... see when you get out and you owe somebody a load of money they are going to be looking it they are not going to let it lie... [*Do young*

41 'Hole' refers to anal cavity. The young men often kept contraband there to avoid it being found by staff, this was colloquially referred to as "cheeking it" (Brian).

men face the same problems in here now as they did in the past?] It is completely different, it is an open jail now, you can dander about and do what you want more or less... it would be easier to get drugs as well, it is easier to pass about [*What other sort of problems do you think young men have in here?*] Probably bullying... Debt. It all starts off with debt, you don't pay your debt you get bullied and then it just keeps happening and happening and happening [*Would that lead to fighting?*] Aye you would probably get the head slapped off you on the landing, if there are officers about you go into the ablutions or whatever or somebody comes into your cell... people pressuring your family outside to send them postal orders and all... getting somebody outside to go to that person's ma's door and say listen you may send that £700 up to that fucking jail. (Mick)

And other examples of violent bullying in relation to drugs were discussed:

There were fellas there that were fighting over half a tablet, one fella got jumped by three of them out in the main area out there [points] over half a tablet he was getting his own medication prescribed to him, but they wanted it, and they jumped him for it. (Henry)

Due to the open nature in Hydebank and incidents such as those previously highlighted, the interviews found there was an increased perception of paranoia in young men. This was also supported within the CJINI (2016b: 12) report which highlighted an increase in bullying and young men reporting that “they felt more unsafe than at the last inspection”. Indeed, “it is widely acknowledged that drugs present contemporary prison governors and officers with one of the greatest threats to security and control” (Jewkes, 2005: 169). This was not only in relation to illicit substances, prisoner medication was also a prime target for theft and bullying:

David would hit someone and told them to go down and get sleeping tablets and give them to him and then if they didn't do it they would get kickings⁴² and if they moved landings they would get kickings on the other landing as well. (Adam)

The institution had some responsibility for this; at times medication was not administered in the evenings due to staff and nurse shortages which meant that nurses regularly gave medication as a take away dose which should have been taken under supervision (CJINI, 2016b). Inspectors found that there were also worries that

42 To get a kicking meant to be beaten up by a group of more than one individual resulting in falling to the ground where you will then be kicked. In Adam's quotation he is using 'kicking' as a plural, something that would happen to the young men a number of times.

young men were not swallowing tablets, but keeping them in their mouth in order to build the dosage up and take it all at once. However, the SEHSCT were taking steps to combat this by liquidising certain forms of medication such as Pregabalin (Lyrica).

In relation to masculinities, as already discussed, the informal economy is inherently connected to drugs and elements of hegemony, power and control. In addition, in reference to the individualised use of drugs, many of the young men were reluctant to admit present problems with drugs and instead described it as a habit and something that they had under control:

I am a drug taker, fucking, I smoke a wee bit of grass, but I don't take tablets or anything. A wee bit's enough for me... for me it's just something I do, I like getting stoned during the day and having a good giggle. (Gary)

I have seen boys there and they have got the gloves, filling them with lighter petrol, lighter fluid man, and sitting sniffing that. It gets fairly bad for them... I don't take no tablets or shit like that, I would take the odd joint to tell the truth to you, I see no harm in that compared with what they are doing. (Henry)

I was on it [drugs] for a long time like... Blues, yellows [Benzodiazepine tablets], grass, coke, MD [MDMA] and then that herbal, sky high and all I was bad like... it was just a vicious cycle for me, wake up and wonder where my next box of blues is coming from or where I am getting a bag of grass from. It was bad like... it is one of the reasons I am here now, taking too many blues... I will stop taking the tablets and all, but I will still smoke green. I have to, I would rather do that than have a drink... I am still coming off everything. (Stuart)

Throughout the interviews the young men portrayed an image of being in control, a key characteristic of hegemonic masculinity. They described their drug usage as a casual, controlled recreational activity, often justifying their own usage by comparing it to those with more serious 'problems'. Another issue that was raised by Stuart was drugs being "one of the reasons I am here now". Again it was common to link drug usage to criminality and underlying reasons for why the young men were in Hydebank. In the context of wider NI society this was not abnormal. In the study conducted by Reilly et al., (2004) they found that young men in NI consistently provided a justification for violence, which was commonly the influence of drugs or

alcohol. This finding was consistent with Harland and McCready (2014) who found that violent altercations often happened over weekend periods when young men were induced with drugs and alcohol. This was again a common finding in Hydebank, where some young men even admitted to having woken up in police cells with no recollection of why they were there:

I woke up the next day in the cell and I went and banged the cell door and said look am I getting bail here, cause I didn't know what I was down for, and they said "you are in for attempted murder, you're getting remanded into custody" and I went "what? Attempted murder who on?" And I actually assaulted my girl [girlfriend], I stabbed him [the complainant], fucking hit another boy and I couldn't remember. (Adam)

The prevalence of substance misuse as a reason for being imprisoned evidently highlights a wider social problem facing young men within the NI context. As aforementioned, drugs provide young men with temporary feelings of control, a method used to combat feelings of marginalisation and powerlessness.

8.5 Conclusion

Within the prison setting a variety of sources of vulnerability are apparent. Within prison literature it is rare for these sources of vulnerability to be explored in relation to expressions of masculinity, which ultimately fails to recognise or validate how men can be vulnerable and and/or be impacted by these varying sources of vulnerability on a daily basis (Sloan, 2016). This chapter has sought to address this gap in literature, exploring some of the most common sources of vulnerability facing young men in Hydebank through the lens of critical masculinities studies.

It is evident that many of the sources of vulnerability facing young men within Hydebank are products of the wider health and social problems facing young men from lower socio-economic classes, not only within NI, but wider afield. As previously mentioned, for prisoners "the seeds of poor health are sown for the majority long before they entered an institution" (Spencer, 2001:18). Indeed, the majority of young men in Hydebank enter the prison with a mental health issue and around 13 percent enter the prison with physical health problems (CJINI, 2016b). To exacerbate these problems further, this study has identified that many of the young men in Hydebank believe that the healthcare provision within the institution

is inadequate both in its quality and in terms of the time it takes to get an appointment. Indeed, this was supported by CJINI (2016b) inspection that found that only 23 percent of the young men believed that the quality of health care was ‘good’, much less than the average UK prison comparator of 55 percent. Additionally, the inspection stated that “aspects of mental health provision were inadequate” (CJINI (2016b: 14) with mental health problems affecting the majority (63 percent) of young men in the prison (CJINI, 2016b).

Additionally, there was confusion as to who was responsible for providing mental health support in the prison, with many of the young men believing Start 360 were the primary providers, when their principal role was to provide moral and practical support. These issues were exacerbated by the way that masculinities were expressed within the institution, with many of the young men conforming to the hegemonic ideal and the belief that men should be in total control and show no signs of weakness. Poor mental and physical health threaten male autonomy, as control over the self is one of the most prominent facets of the hegemonic ideal of masculinity (Sloan, 2016). As a result, men may neglect or hide any forms of mental or physical vulnerability. In the ultra-masculine environment in Hydebank, a large number of the young men stressed that feelings and emotions could not be shared or discussed, out of fear of bullying and victimisation.

In relation to self-harm, it was recognised as being a significant problem facing young men in Hydebank by both the prisoners and the staff. The CJINI (2016b) inspection report indicated that there had been 57 incidents of self-harm in the six months prior to the inspection. This was, on average, approximately the same rate as the period prior to the CJINI (2013) inspection of 1.16 incidents per prisoner per annum. Self-harm was described by the young men as a method of coping with the rigours of imprisonment. The young men often spoke of the relief that self-harm provided, that it “releases everything from you” (Adam). Exploring this “morbid form of self-help” (Favazza, 1996: xix) through the lens of critical masculinities studies it became apparent that while self-harm could be used as a means of releasing feelings of tension, frustration and anger, it was also used at times as a method of avoiding alternative behaviours which may jeopardise the prisoner status of the young men, “I feel like hurting myself prevented me hurting him” (Gary). It was

evident that self-harm was a means of expressing agency and control over circumstance within the setting, alleviating feelings of powerlessness.

Continuing with the theme of agency, there was a perception that self-harm was used by young men as a form of ‘manipulation’ over their situation and the prison staff. Although a minority of the young men claimed using self-harm ‘strategically’ this can result in a misperception as to why young men self-harm and subsequently a lack of understanding towards those who do. It is more appropriate to view self-harm as an intrapersonal approach to dealing with problems as opposed to an interpersonal one. It is an act committed to achieve the desired effects for an individual, as opposed to its effects on others (Spandler, 2001). Although, there have not been any suicides in Hydebank for the last number of years, the post-prison suicide discussed should serve as a stark reminder to the institution of the serious problems many of these young men are facing and the need for improved support in the area.

Finally, drugs within the institution, both prescription and illicit, were key topics of public discourse and repeatedly identified as a significant problem facing young men within the institution. Drugs related to individualised sources of vulnerability facing young men in terms of addiction, but also collective vulnerability due to their contribution to the social dynamic within the institution which often resulted in violence, bullying and victimisation. The popularity of ‘legal highs’ within Hydebank was evident. The young men were open about the use of ‘legal highs’, which were not detectable on prison drugs tests and therefore did not make their prisoner status vulnerable. This form of resistance was a means of expressing agency, power and control over their situation. The punishment of those with addiction problems within the institution was regularly discussed by the young men, as highlighted by Aaron it is “just making them worse”. Young men caught taking illegal drugs may be locked in their cell longer, lose association time, lose enhancement privileges and lose electronic devices which may help pass time. As a result, young men often found themselves situated in a vicious cycle of drug use and punishment. The young men also spoke of taking drugs as a method of coping with feelings of vulnerability. Drugs, in particular cannabis, became a method of coping for some of the young men in Hydebank. Drug use in prison can be used as a means for prisoners to avoid or escape their problems “It takes your mind of things for the

worst” (Tony). The utilisation of drugs during these periods was a method of reasserting their control over time and reclaiming it as their own, making it more fun, allowing it to pass quicker and reasserting their masculinity.

In conclusion, the sources of vulnerability found within Hydebank are exacerbated by those expressions of masculinity within the institution which are characterised by dominance, stoicism and aggression. The need to reaffirm masculine traits in an ultra-masculine prison sphere pressures young men to act in a certain manner, at times rejecting the relevant support in the aim of avoiding portrayals of weakness. This vicious cycle heightens the problems facing young men as they turn to drugs, self-harm and violence to alleviate feelings of vulnerability.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Their Chapter

Through the lens of critical masculinities studies, this research has explored the needs and experiences of young men imprisoned in NI. This was achieved through a nine-month ethnographic study within Hydebank, providing an in-depth insight into young men's prison needs and experiences. The unprecedented access enabled the researcher to build rapport and relationships with the young men that greatly contributed to the richness of the findings. The strength of these relationships was evident in the openness and honesty shown by participants. In interviews, the young men discussed feelings of vulnerability, marginalisation and loneliness, alongside detailed experiences of their lives inside and outside prison:

... I'm only 21 and I have done six years in jail. That's bad like and then especially with the child it breaks your heart like... the child is five now, so for the first two and a half years of her life I was close with her. I bonded with her and she was a wee daddy's girl. To go [from that] until now, where she barely knows who you are, like I don't want to admit that, but I know... You phone her, she knows who it is, but she doesn't know how much it means. She knows, that's my daddy, but the bond is not there anymore. So it's like sometimes you phone her and she has no interest, she is playing with her mates. That sort of thing hurts you like; she would rather play with her mates than talk to her daddy. (Ryan)

... every cunt in here will say they haven't cried behind that door; they have... Everyone cries in behind that door, I'm used to this place now, but see whenever I know I need a wee cry, I go in and listen to Ed Sheeran or Adele or something and have a wee cry... it helps you, there's nothing else to do. I used to cut myself to deal with it, but now I cry... (Adam)

For these reasons, this chapter is dedicated to the young men in Hydebank who warmly welcomed the researcher into their company, trusting him with their thoughts and words, for this, he will be eternally grateful. The chapter re-vocalises the young men's contributions throughout, as a reminder, in concluding the study, of the needs of this marginalised group of prisoners.

9.2 Introduction

Within the context of young men in prison, this study has engaged in critique of masculinities, manhood and men's gender identity construction. In doing so, the

study has highlighted how damaging some expressions of masculinity can be to young men in prison as they can encourage an idealisation of a hegemonic expression of masculinity that is characterised by dismissal of emotion, aggression and violence, which results in the social and physical subordination of other expressions of masculinity. The ethnographic framework incorporated methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, providing an insight into prisoners' 'frontstage' and 'backstage' presentations of self (Goffman, 1959). The participant observation, conducted in vocational training, educational classes, recreational activities and association periods, provided an insight into the social aspect and public presentations of identity. It was evident through the participant observation that many of the young men idealised expressions of masculinity characterised by emotional fortitude, aggression and repression of any behaviour perceived to be 'feminine'. The semi-structured interviews complemented the participant observation, providing an understanding of the young men's subjective perspectives and experiences. Amongst other issues, they provided insight into many of the sources of vulnerability experienced by the young men in Hydebank, particularly health concerns, self-harm issues and drug addiction; issues the young men at times were reluctant to discuss in a group dynamic.

Supported by the voices of the young men throughout, this chapter provides a conclusion to the research. The remainder of the chapter is broken into three sections: the first explores the main themes that emerged from the findings of the study, the second provides a consideration of young men's experiences of Hydebank's regime, and the final section considers the potential for future research in the area.

9.3 The combination of deprivations and wider social factors in shaping masculinities in Hydebank

This section explores the main themes that emerged from the research and their contribution to prisons and youth masculinities literature. It is broken into two sub-sections: the first explores how expressions of masculinity in Hydebank were shaped by wider social factors and the deprivations of imprisonment; and the second examines young men's gendered experiences of prison time and vulnerability within Hydebank.

9.3.1 The combination of wider social factors and deprivations in shaping masculinities in Hydebank

There is a dearth of literature that considers the construction of youth masculinities within the context of post-conflict NI (see Ashe and Harland, 2014; Harland and McCready, 2014). This thesis advances knowledge of youth prison masculinities by analysing feelings of marginalisation, powerlessness and vulnerability in young men; and exploring their socialisation in cultures defined by violence, masculine stoicism and an anti-authority code of ‘honour’. In doing so, this thesis makes connections between the prison environment for young men in NI and the wider socio-political context from which these prisoners derive. Through the discussion of these connections, this thesis advances prison youth masculinities theory by building upon the studies of prisoner ‘masking’, ‘fronting’ and ‘hyper-masculinity’ (see Sim, 1994; Toch 1998) and exploring the issues that the young men bring – import – into the prison and the impact of imprisonment on these issues. Especially in relation to young men’s relationships with each other, and the hierarchies that these relationships produce.

This is achieved by identifying how issues such as: the requirement for emotional control, interactions with paramilitaries, the commonality of violence, feelings of marginalisation and adherence to unwritten rules, permeate the prison walls and shape young prisoners’ masculinities. It also considers how the deprivations of imprisonment and power relationships that affected the young men’s experiences– including their relationship with the institution, staff and other young men – removed avenues for achieving masculinities deemed traditional in wider society. As a result, the young men often resorted to behaviours that were culturally idealised by the prisoner society in the aim of achieving expressions of masculinity within the institution.

The combination of wider social issues and deprivations of imprisonment in shaping masculinities is best evidenced through the exploration of violence within Hydebank. Examining violence within the wider NI socio-political context first (also see Chapter 5), NI has a history of over 40 years of violent ethno-nationalist conflict that has significantly shaped the lives of young men within working-class communities (Harland and McCready, 2015). Young men’s identities are being constructed in communities where previous generations of young men saw themselves as violent defenders of their community during a period of conflict.

Certified by mural depictions throughout working-class communities, previous generations of young men were provided with feelings of power, status, respect and purpose (Murray, 1995; Hamber and Gallagher, 2014). Additionally, violent and often unwelcomed interactions with paramilitary members contributed to the normalisation of violence and distorted notions of justice amongst young prisoners within Hydebank. Many had experienced some form of “paramilitary policing” (Gallagher, 2017: 59) at the hands of paramilitary organisations with experiences of death threats, being shot and broken bones. As discussed by Markus, “Aye I’ve been beat numerous times by paramilitaries, death threats, hands broke, arms broke, tried to do my legs”.

While the wider social factors that socialise young men and shape youth masculinities prior to imprisonment have been discussed above, this thesis also demonstrates how the deprivations implemented through the disciplinary power of imprisonment further contributed to the construction of violent expressions of masculinity in Hydebank. Chapter 6 evidenced the gendered nature of Hydebank as an institution, characterised by power and control over its inhabitants. Through its implementation of incapacitation, the prison removed avenues for achieving expressions of masculinity deemed traditional in wider society such as family provision, autonomy and heterosexual relations. As a result, behaviours that were culturally approved by the prisoner society became methods for achieving masculinities within the institution. The study identified how visible displays of violence had a high communicative value (see Crawley and Crawley, 2008) within Hydebank and were utilised as a means of “doing masculinity” (Messerschmidt, 1993: 81). Visible displays of violence by individuals, helped portray a violent expression of masculinity to the prisoner society, which in turn could prevent stigmatisation and victimisation:

I had to do something or everyone would think I was a soft touch, so I jumped up and punched him in the face and just kept going, I punched him the whole way across the room and into the grille and when he fell down I started kneeing him in the face... if someone comes up to you like that you have to do something, if you don’t it’s called ‘buckling’.
(Gary)

The complexity of the construction of masculinity has been evidenced through this thesis’s exploration of the high prevalence of violence within Hydebank. Within the socio-political context of NI, amongst other issues, young men have lost historically

available avenues into achieving expressions of territorial and/or protective masculinity (through paramilitary organisations). Yet, they are growing up in environments where depictions of paramilitary organisations adorn murals throughout their communities and many experience violent attacks by the remnants of these organisations. To compound matters, through the deprivations of imprisonment, other avenues for achieving traditional masculinities – such as family provision, autonomy and heterosexual relations – are removed from prisoners. Within this environment, violent behaviour, something many of the young men were socialised into from a young age, became culturally approved as a way of achieving masculinity.

Further evidence of the complexity of the construction of young men's masculinities, came through exploration of how expressions of emotion are constrained by both the NI social context and the deprivations implemented through imprisonment. Through discussions with the young men and observations within the prison setting it became evident that there was an imperative to conceal any form of weakness within the prison or “you are fucked” (Adam). A principal characteristic of masculinities found in young working-class men in wider NI society (see Harland and McCready, 2014), the requirement to conceal weakness, was deemed to be a key survival strategy in Hydebank and a means of avoiding exploitation. The dismissal of emotion was one of the principal characteristics of the idealised hegemonic expression of masculinity within Hydebank's prisoner society. This was the expression of masculinity that most of the young men compared themselves to and measured themselves against (Connell, 1987; 1995). A result of this was the emergence of a ‘masculinity test’, a way of the young men measuring the degree of vulnerability of new prisoners. It took shape in a number of ways, but mainly through confrontation or theft of personal possessions. There was a widespread consensus that an individual's response to the ‘masculinity test’ could define the nature of their experiences within the prison:

It usually happens within your first week, especially if you are a first timer to Hydebank... you are gonna be put in a situation, maybe even by someone on the landing who's not considered a hard man, to be stepped upon. You know, to have someone pushed in your face, fucking see what way you are gonna react and if you do react, how... (Gary)

It was evident that any signs of weakness invited bullying and intimidation. The only means of preventing this happening was appearing to be strong, aggressive and

violent, “you have to belt them like” (Brendy). Through examination of this ‘masculinity test’, the thesis demonstrates how visible displays of violence had a high communicative value (see Crawley and Crawley, 2008) within Hydebanks and were utilised as a means of “doing masculinity” (Messerschmidt, 1993: 81). Through public displays of violence young men were engaging in specific inter-personal interactions as a means of promoting a violent expression of masculinity to their peers. The purpose behind this was to deter future perpetrators by highlighting to the wider group that any attempts at victimisation or exploitation would prompt a violent reaction. Further advancing knowledge in the area this thesis considered how the suppressive attitude towards ‘heavy-whackers’ is, in part, related to the need among young prisoners to protect themselves from contemplating their own vulnerabilities; in a sense, a form of prison socialisation.

By exploring the construction of youth masculinities, as a product of wider socio-political issues and the deprivations of imprisonment, through the lens of issues such as violence and emotional control, this thesis has furthered understanding of youth masculinities and highlighted the complexity of the construction of youth masculinities in prison. The next subsection will highlight this thesis’s discussion of young men’s experiences of time and vulnerability in prison.

9.3.2 Young men’s gendered experiences of time and vulnerability in Hydebanks

The previous subsection highlighted how this thesis has contributed to prisons and youth masculinity literature through the connections between NI’s unique socio-political context and the prison environment within Hydebanks. This subsection emphasises how this dissertation advances prison youth masculinities theory by building upon studies that focus on dominant, violent and ‘hypermasculine’ masculinities (see Sim, 1994; Toch 1998) and exploring the gendered dimensions to the ways in which the participants experience temporality and vulnerability in prison. For the young men in Hydebanks coping with their ‘whack’ of time in prison and securing a form of masculine credibility were essential to prison survival. For some of those serving long sentences, they utilised the cultural perceptions of time spent in prison to provide themselves with immunity from critique and enabled them to inhabit a transitional expression masculinity.

Through the identification and analysis of these characteristics, this dissertation progresses prison youth masculinities literature in a number of ways.

Commencing with the discussion of ‘heavy-whackers’ this thesis highlighted how the deprivations of imprisonment can result in the idealisation of an expression of masculinity within the prison that was characterised by toughness, aggression and stoicism (Toch, 1998). As a result, of the presence of this idealised expression, a hierarchy of masculinities emerged with this expression situated at the apex. Those prisoners who were deemed ‘weaker’ became subjugated and stigmatised. It was evident that young men’s temporal experiences were affected by this gendered hierarchy. Those who were perceived to be ‘weaker’ were often those who struggled to deal with prison time. They were labelled ‘heavy-whackers’ and looked down on by their peers for not being able to ‘hack the whack’ of time that they had been given:

Heavy-whacker... it’s if you are running about every day complaining. Like if you complain about everything, every single day, then you are not doing your whack. See if you are just doing your whack, you are chilling out and you are doing it. You have your head down, you’re not complaining about nothing, you take it and everything how it is, know what I mean. You are taking it on the chin... (Martin)

These subordinated expressions of masculinity juxtaposed more dominant, stoical expressions of masculinity within the prison, exemplified by those who “kick their feet back, put the TV on, watch TV, smoke a few rollies” (Charles). Previous studies have identified hierarchies shaped by perceptions of masculinity (see Sim, 1994; Toch, 1998). This thesis builds on such knowledge through the finding that the suppressive attitude towards ‘heavy-whackers’ was, in part, related to the need among young prisoners to protect themselves from contemplating their own vulnerabilities. The subordination of those ‘heavy-whackers’, who the wider group of young men felt constantly bemoaned their time being spent within the institution, was a form of self-protection, but also prison socialisation. More experienced young men socialised the newer prisoners into not talking about their vulnerabilities, as it served as a reminder, to those forced to listen, of the pains they were suffering. Instead, newer prisoners were socialised into internalising problems and concerns regarding deprivations. The stigmatisation of ‘heavy-whackers’ certified hegemonic expressions of masculinity that show no sign of weakness or emotion. This had further implications for the young men as it forced them to internalise problems and find other mechanisms for alleviating their pain and suffering, such as self-harm and substance abuse.

This thesis additionally furthers prison youth masculinities literature further through the identification of the phenomenon defined by the author as the ‘Young-Elders’. The Young-Elders were a group of young men who ‘complied’ with Hydebank’s code of conduct, but due to the length of time they had spent in prison were given a certain amount of respect from the wider group. The Young-Elders expressed masculinities and characteristics that differed from the traits possessed by the idealised hegemonic expression of masculinity within the prisoner society. They expressed transitional and non-criminal masculinities such as father, employed and fiancé, expressions that could be considered traditional in the context of wider society. Through the expression of these masculinities and the behaviour associated with them, the ‘Young-Elders’ were able to “swim with” (Crewe et al., 2017) the tide of the regime, complying with its rules and regulations and benefitting from the highest levels of enhancement. In doing so, where other young men who complied with the institution were stigmatised, the Young-Elders subverted gendered notions of time to attain peer status on the basis of the length of time they had, or were due to, spend in the prison. This meant that although they were expressing masculinities that differed greatly from the idealised expression of masculinity within the institution they were also given a certain level of respect from the prisoner society. As is evident in Gerard’s quote:

At the end of the day if you look at us as a group, we are in here for some serious shit, I mean if you look at this landing we have over a hundred years between us (nine on the landing) so they can’t look at us like that. (Gerard)

The experiences of the Young-Elders provide evidence that forms of transitional masculinities existed within the prison environment, which did not idealise the more violent expressions of masculinity that were hegemonic within the young prisoner culture, but rather were consistent with broader societal ideals. The research found that these expressions could exist relatively free from stigmatisation and be accepted and even respected by the prisoner society. The identification of this phenomenon advances prisons masculinities literature and provides us an insight into how prison regimes can create spaces for young men to inhabit a mode of respectable masculinity.

The discussion regarding the presence of violence and dismissal of emotion in the previous sub-section, alongside other issues discussed throughout this thesis, highlights the vulnerability of those young men within Hydebank. Vulnerability was

often something neglected in prisons masculinity literature, particularly in research that focuses on hyper-masculinity (see Toch, 1998), however more recently authors such as Crewe (2009; 2014) have made the case that male prison identities are much more diverse and complex than a lot of traditional research suggests. For example, Crewe (2014) identified how male prisoners can develop strong homo-social bonds in the prison setting. This thesis has furthered the new focus on prisoner vulnerability by highlighting some of the issues facing young men in Hydebank. Not only does this further prison masculinity literature, it also highlights many of the on-going concerns in prisons in NI.

As was highlighted in Chapter 8, it is common for young men to associate vulnerability with ‘femininity’. A result of this is the failure to recognise how young men are affected by sources of vulnerability on a daily basis (Sloan, 2016). This thesis explored significant sources of vulnerability affecting young men in prison through the lens of critical masculinities studies. Through discussions with the young men and prison staff during the interviews and observations, concerns were raised in relation to mental health, self-harm and substance misuse issues facing the young men in Hydebank. This was in a context where expressions of masculinity were characterised by stoicism, strength, control over the self and dismissal of emotion or any signs of weakness. These characteristics were largely damaging. The ‘masculinity test’, discussed previously, served as a method of certifying these stoical expressions of masculinity, rendering those who show vulnerability during the ‘test’ as someone who will become subordinated and victimised (also a method of self-protection). As a result, young men were reluctant to talk about vulnerability “you can’t let anyone know your weaknesses in here or you are fucked” (Adam). Young men therefore spoke about neglecting or hiding any forms of mental or physical vulnerability out of fear of bullying and victimisation:

Sure I was in a car crash a few weeks back and I didn’t see anyone until 24 hours after. The day of the car crash I came back and I didn’t even want to say anything. I hate being unable to do something. (Aaron)

This thesis advances masculinity literature within the context of NI, particularly within the context of prisons literature; as contemporary prisons literature – from outside NI – suggests that men are relatively open and honest regarding mental health issues (see Crewe, 2009; Sloan, 2016). In contrast, this thesis found a reluctance from young men in Hydebank to discuss issues of mental health, and other

perceived vulnerabilities. Furthering this finding, the dissertation identified some of the methods these young men were utilising in Hydebank to cope with their issues and emotions.

Self-harm and the use of drugs were methods of coping for some. The high number of self-harm incidents amongst young men prisoners within NI (1.16 incidents per prisoner per annum [CJINI, 2016b]) was much greater than in other UK jurisdictions (see MoJ, 2017). The CJINI (2016b) identified that through SPAR documentation there had been an improvement in the case management of prisoners at risk, however issues still remained in relation to the completion and quality of the documents. Self-harm was described as a method of coping with the rigours of imprisonment. Reluctant to seek support or discuss personal issues, young men in prison spoke of the relief that self-harm provided, it “releases everything from you” (Adam). In the same vein, drug use within Hydebank – both legal and illegal – provided avenues for coping with feelings of vulnerability and deprivations such as loss of time “it takes your mind off things for the worst” (Tony). Exploring the use of self-harm and drug use through the lens of critical masculinities studies, this thesis has highlighted that both can become a form of emotional outlet, releasing pains, problems, tensions and frustrations that young men keep bottled up and cannot talk to others about:

... once you cut, you let it all out, it's lethal [amazing]... as soon as I cut and I see the blood coming out I know everything is alright... (Adam)

[Drugs] Just make you feel, I don't know if they make you feel better like, but they make you feel good... they make time go in. (Markus)

Ongoing concerns about healthcare provision were reiterated by the CJINI (2016b) inspection, which found that only 23 percent of the young men believed that the quality of health care was ‘good’, much less than the average UK prison comparator of 55 percent. In particular, the CJINI identified that for those involved in mental health care the support was good, however aspects of “provision were inadequate” (CJINI, 2016b: 14). The young men supported this sentiment:

Put it this way I have been in here three and a half years and I still haven't seen mental health... you have to say to health care about it know what I mean, say to the nurses in our house, but I have been saying to them since I've came in like... (Ryan)

There was also some confusion in relation to the responsibility of the provision of health-care with many of the young men believing Start 360 were primary providers, when in reality the SEHSCT were the principal providers. While it was not the purpose of this thesis – nor does the researcher have the relevant expertise – to examine the quality of health-care within the institution, it was evident there was a clear disconnect between the young men and SEHSCT within Hydebank:

... I done 25 months on remand dealing with my shit by myself... it is a complete breach of my human rights and at the end of the day I could of hurt myself or somebody else, fortunately it didn't happen like... I still haven't properly seen anybody. (George)

This was evidenced, as discussed in Chapter 8, through the fact that so many of the young men were reluctant to speak to health care about the problems they are facing, coping with their problems through other emotional outlets, such as self-harm and drug use. The significant levels of self-harm within the prison, coupled with the post-prison suicide mentioned in Chapter 8, highlight a deeply concerning issue that must be addressed. In particular, the young man who committed suicide post-release and stated:

Well I was speaking to psychiatrists and all and been going to the doctor and stuff [*And how often was that?*] Well they stopped that there about two weeks ago [*How come?*] They said I didn't need the help, but sure that's up to them. Even though I do need the help like. I have made another appointment to speak to the doctor.

While this incident took place outside Hydebank, it should serve as a stark reminder to the institution and health-care systems of the serious problems many of these young men are facing and the need for improved support in the area. This section has explored young men's gendered experiences of time and vulnerability in Hydebank, the next section will consider young men's experiences of the regime.

9.4 Young men's experiences of Hydebank's regime

... I'm not gonna call it a College because at the end of the day what College locks you behind a door. Locks you behind a fucking grille, know what I mean, that's just the way it is. I'm an inmate, I am not a student. (Johnny)

The previous section explored how social factors and deprivations shaped masculinities in Hydebank and considered young men's gendered experiences of time and vulnerability in the institution. This section explores how specific aspects

of the regime in Hydebank shaped masculinities within the setting and discusses some of the young men's perspectives of the regime. As has been evidenced in the previous section, through the 'masculinity test', expressions of masculinity were measured against one another in Hydebank. An inevitable product of this was the emergence of a gendered power hierarchy (Connell, 1987; 1995). Within Hydebank, expressions of masculinity characterised by violence, intimidation and dismissal of emotion were situated at the top of the hierarchy. Juxtaposing this, less aggressive and less dominant young men could become *socially* subordinated, subjected to bullying and victimisation and other young men who were suspected of being in prison for sexual offences or offences against children ('roots') could be *physically* segregated and moved to C2. While other prisons literature also highlights masculine prison hierarchies (see Sim, 1994; Toch, 1998), this study has furthered literature in the area by examining how the structure of the Hydebank as a prison, combined with the PREPS regime contributed to the commonality of bullying and victimisation in the prison.

As there were only two houses in operation in Hydebank during the fieldwork period, this meant all the more compliant prisoners moved to Cedar and all the least compliant and drug using young men were filtered to the lowest levels of enhancement in Beech. As a result, the regime essentially created a 'power vacuum'. Within the prison, the 'Bower Hoods' reportedly had power over the informal economy, they were widely feared by the wider group of young men and were the principal perpetrators of bullying and victimisation:

The Bower ones, you know they know each other from the outside and there's that many of them, you know they just seem to run about in their own wee clique [*Would other young men be intimidated by them?*] I've seen it in some people. Aye I have alright [*Bullying?*] Oh aye, they would bully people, I've seen them bully people. (Thomas)

Throughout the fieldwork period a relatively large proportion of the young men from the 'Bower' estate were held on the lower landings in Beech House. While PREPS serves to individualise prisoners and dilute the sense of collectiveness amongst the group, this research found that this proves extremely difficult if a group of individuals possess strong bonds prior to entering the institution. Many of the young men spoke of the challenges of pursuing positive behaviour whilst on the same landing as friends from the outside and found it difficult to progress to the higher landings and more enhanced regime. The prison at times tried to break up groups

such as the ‘Bower Hoods’, but inevitably the same non-compliant young men ended up back on the same lower landings in Beech house.

As discussed in the previous section, Chapter 7 examined the hierarchical nature of masculinity within the institution, highlighting the links between time spent in prison and inter-prisoner hierarchy. The chapter explored how young men could utilise mechanisms of masculine visibility, such as graffiti, to reiterate their social standing within the institution. It highlighted how Hydebank as an institution contributed to the hierarchy surrounding time, initially by providing the young men with ascending prisoner numbers, making it very simple to differentiate which prisoners had been in longer than others. In addition, the prison provided the young men with lanyards to keep identity cards on. The identity cards displayed the young men’s prisoner number, making it easier again to identify the longest inhabitants of the institution. Visibility is central to theory of hegemonic masculinities, as without visible displays of expressions of hegemonic or subordinated masculinity men do not have anything to compare themselves to (Connell, 1987; 1995; Sloan, 2016). In the aim of promoting their own masculinity the young men subsequently included their prisoner number and the length of time due to be spent in the institution in graffiti throughout the prison, further highlighting to viewers the length of time they have spent in the institution:

I think just that it shows that they are in for something serious, I suppose it relates to what they are in for. You know if you see somebody with like ten years, like there was a boy out there who was in for ten years and if you see that then there’s only a couple of things that your gonna think, either he is in for a sex offence or he is in for seriously hurting someone else, so yeah it kind of goes by that too. (Gary)

There is a notable lack of prison literature which focuses on ‘masculine visibility’ within the prison setting, therefore the exploration within the thesis of the use of the prisoner ID’s and prison graffiti advances literature in the area. However, it also advances understandings of prisons and prison regimes, particularly within the context of NI. As is evident from the discussions of masculine visibility, the provision of prisoner numbers to young men in Hydebank provided them a means to hierarchize themselves by the length of time they had spent in the prison.

The thesis further advanced understanding of prisons through its critique of the PREPS in Chapter 6. The chapter highlighted that indicators on violence within Hydebank may not have been a complete record; as was also evidenced by the CJINI

(2016b: 23) report which stated, “incidents of bullying were not being recorded”. The research for this thesis found that a contributing factor to this “dark figure” of unreported incidents (Biderman and Reiss, 1967: 1) was the implementation of the PREPS. Because of the individualisation system, bullying and violence were pushed underground and not always reported. The incentives for good behaviour meant young men took extra precautions to avoid being caught. As a result, there was added emphasis on the ‘unwritten rules’ and further retribution for those who broke the inmate code. This was highlighted by some young men who spoke of attention being drawn to the landing thus impacting on the informal economy: “don’t do anything that is going to stop other inmates doing stuff” (Martin) as it will result in “everyone is running about getting everything moved” (Brendy). Many young men spoke of fighting in cells and CCTV blind spots to avoid being caught or the fights could even be organised by the more powerful groups to avoid bringing attention to the informal economy:

If there’s any fights or anything they [whatever gang holds power at the time] will hear about it before it happens... it would be “right these two are slabbering” [threatening each other] and then it’s, “do they need to sort it out?” Or “can they just leave it?”... you don’t want any attention because there are lots of drugs or whatever flying about, but these two eejits are trying to start fighting each other it’s gonna bring even more attention that we don’t need. (Brendy)

The CJINI (2016b: 12) report, drawing upon findings from a survey conducted with the young men, highlighted an increase in bullying and that the young men “felt more unsafe than at the last inspection”, however “recorded levels of violence were not excessive”. Examining this trend at a deeper level it appeared that the young men were co-operating in their own incarceration, effectively governing themselves to individually benefit from the incentivised regime. It was evident in this regard that the young men were attempting to express some agency over their situation. Agency, a central characteristic of normative expressions of masculinity (Bandyopadhyay, 2006; Ricciardelli et al., 2015) is “tightly restricted and denied within prisons” (Moore and Scraton, 2014: 36). Through this expression of agency, the young men were fighting in private so as not to draw the attention of staff, which subsequently allowed the young men to operate the informal market, be involved in violence and intimidation, and also benefit from the PREPS enhancements.

Continuing with the discussion of agency, PREPS was linked to coping mechanisms such as self-harm and drugs within the prison. Examining the use of drugs within the system first, Chapter 8 highlighted the popularity of ‘legal highs’ within Hydebank. There is a dearth of prisons literature focusing on the use of ‘legal highs’, as the emergence of the use of ‘legal highs’ is a relatively new phenomenon in itself (see Wadsworth et al., 2017), this thesis furthered knowledge in the field by exploring the ‘strategic’ use of ‘legal highs’ in Hydebank. The strategic use of ‘legal highs’ within Hydebank allowed the young men to pass drugs tests, therefore not jeopardising their enhancement level. In a similar vein, a small minority of young men, such as Markus, admitted using self-harm as a means of regaining enhancements that had been removed from them, “[*why do you do it [self-harm]?*] Just stupid things like not getting hot water in flasks... like not getting out for phone calls or being locked early” and others used it to avoid alternative behaviours that may jeopardise their prisoner status, “I feel like hurting myself prevented me hurting him” (Gary). While it is more appropriate to view self-harm and drug use as acts committed by young men to achieve the desired effects for an individual – as opposed to viewing it as ‘manipulative’ behaviour (Spandler, 2001) – it was evident that they could both be linked to the implementation of the PREPS and the young men attempting to express some degree of agency over their situation. Agency and control were essential characteristics of the idealised expression of masculinity amongst the prisoner group. For some of the young men self-harm became a means of regaining enhancements and drug use was a means of strategically navigating the PREPS system; therefore, the use of both, in some circumstances, could be viewed as expressing a degree of agency and control over their situation.

The PREPS system was also subject to criticism from young men. The CJINI (2016b: 12) suggested that the PREPS “was well managed and adjudications conducted fairly” and it was successful in strategically managing the young men’s behaviour, “used to reward and encourage good behaviour as well as to apply sanctions” (CJINI, 2016b: 27). However, some young men felt that manipulative forms of control defined their daily interactions with staff. The prison staff at ground level had significant discretionary power in relation to the PREPS, they were imperative in deciding whether the young men progressed through the system, remained where they were or moved to a less enhanced landing:

If they don't like you they'll get you dropped to basic or else outside charges that's the way they all are know what I mean, all fucking eejits [*Is it easy for them to do that?*] Easy? It's like that there [clicks fingers] click of the fingers they can do that. (Dermy)

This use of discretionary power meant that daily interactions between young men and staff, particularly on the landings, were characterised by conscious behavioural consideration. In the same vein as Sykes' (1958) study, it was evident that the staff tolerated minor infringements from some young men for general compliance. As a result, the young men felt that 'favouritism' was a product of the PREPS. They believed that although some staff were fair in their implementation of the system, others could be more lenient or punitive to young men depending on their relationship with them (also see Butler and Maruna, 2017).

Minor criticisms of the 'College' also emerged from discussions with the young men during interviews and observations, such as: some educational classes and vocational training offered no official accreditations; some young men spoke of completing GCSE Maths and English equivalents more than once as there were no higher levels available, yet they still needed to attend educational classes in order to receive their weekly financial incentives; and when the lecturers could not attend class, their classes were not covered, instead the young men were forced to attend classes which they were not enrolled. This was often disruptive and placed an extra burden on lecturers (also see IMB, 2017). However, while this section has offered a number of criticisms of Hydebank's regime, the positive intentions behind the regime have also been discussed throughout this thesis, such as: increasing the out of cell time for young men within the institution and attempting to provide young men with further educational achievements and practical experiences upon release. Indeed, the CJINI (2016b: 46) stated, "education, learning and skills had become firmly established as central to the secure college regime". Furthermore, interviews and observations suggested that the BMC lecturers had great relationships with the young men. It was evident that the young men had a lot of respect for the lecturers and in turn, the lecturers were very passionate about their role in trying to create a positive future for the young men⁴³:

⁴³ In particular, the lecturer who taught the cookery course was very enthusiastic and had a brilliant rapport with most of the young men. He had utilised his contacts in the cookery and catering industry to provide a number of the young men employment opportunities post-release from Hydebank.

See like the education and all in here now... it is a good thing if you are interested, like a lot of guys just get down there and fuck about, but if you really wanna gain a qualification you can do it here. Like the staff are more than happy to engage with you and there's all sorts, there's English, maths, ICT, fucking cookery, arts and crafts... there's everything, everything you could possibly need. (Gary)

The education is very good down here, the teachers are good, they offered me to do my auld maths and English GCSEs and stuff like that... the art class is good, the library you can go in and read an auld book or whatever. It is all right so it is. (Henry)

The CJINI (2016b) also indicated that there had been significant progression in creating an environment for the young men that was positive and provided better opportunities than in previous regimes. Including an improvement in relationships between young men and staff that were in some instances “outstanding” (CJINI, 2016b: 14). Additionally, the positive relationship between the young men and Start 360 staff was worth noting. The Start 360 support team – which included some ex-prisoners from Hydebank – had a great relationship with the young men and it was evident the young men felt comfortable talking to them about a range of issues, including mental health and self-harm:

Start 360 are a great programme, very, very, very good so they are... you can talk to those guys and girls about anything, you know I've close relationships with every single one of them, fuck and they're all brilliant you know they come out and play football with us on their own time, you know they'll go and do things for us they take us to the wee cabin and stuff you know what I mean. They are, they're a great group to have. (Gary)

Start 360... they are a good thing because I got a course with them and see all the stuff they taught it was actually 100%. See all general chat and all, they are the nicest people you will meet like and they talk to you. (Jordan)

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, while this thesis has been critical of Hydebank and significant parts of the PREPS and ‘College’ systems, it recognises the positive principles supporting the ‘College’ system. However, in its current format, while the system is in principle progressive, aspects of its operation are counter-productive. The system provides the young men longer out of cell time during the day than previous regimes, however it has continually failed to address the overuse and unpredictability of ‘firewatch’ in the evenings and weekends (also see IMB, 2017). The young men were regularly placed on ‘firewatch’ in the evening and locked right through until the following morning, subsequently missing association periods. Additionally, the unpredictability which ‘firewatch’ was

implemented evidently frustrated the young men (also see Smyth, 2016; CJINI, 2016b; IMB, 2017). During the extensive evening lock-up periods young men struggle with issues such as isolation, passing time and missing family and friends. Indeed, the CJINI (2016b: 39) support this, adding that the “curtailed evening association and prioritisation of the working day had at times hampered the provision of, and access to, healthcare” for the young men. These issues in turn, exacerbated mental health difficulties, self-harm and behavioural and drug related issues within the prison. Therefore, the over-use of ‘firewatch’ within Hydebank is counter-productive to the positive activities the young men participate in through the ‘College’ regime.

The prison is a masculine institution, with its purpose, implementation of regime and programmes designed by men to punish men (Lutze, 2002) based on hypermasculine ideals (Lutze and Murphy, 1999). An inevitable by-product of this within Hydebank was the presence of an idealised hegemonic expression of masculinity amongst the prisoner society that was characterised by violence, dominance, aggression, stoicism and dismissal of emotion. The need to reaffirm masculine traits in a masculine prison sphere pressures young men to act in a certain manner, at times rejecting the relevant support in the aim of avoiding portrayals of weakness. These hegemonic expressions of masculinity found within Hydebank went largely unchallenged by young men and prison staff. In addition to the damaging affect these expressions of masculinity can have on those who become subordinated, they are also damaging to those young men who adhere to the principles associated with them. These damaging expressions heighten the problems facing young men, as they turn to drugs, self-harm and violence to alleviate feelings of vulnerability.

It was evident that within Hydebank there was a need to implement some form of training for staff to ensure that they feel confident in dealing with issues regarding masculinity and in particular homophobia; and provide them with the ability to discuss these topics with the young men and challenge them when appropriate. Furthermore, education for the young men on these issues would also be beneficial in enabling them to explore their own attitudes towards masculinity and identity. The need for these issues to be addressed was highlighted by the CJINI (2016b: 33)

who identified that there was no clear statement by the prison outlining “the terms of reference of the equality and diversity meeting and the standing agenda did not include all protected groups falling under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998”. Additionally, in the three months prior to their inspection there had been “no recorded discussions about sexual orientation” or “recognition of the problems of homophobia” (CJINI, 2016b: 33). The introduction of provisions to address these issues would enhance young men’s opportunities to recognise progressive and transitional expressions of masculinity, develop methods of expressing emotions and self-respect. While this may draw similarities to other prisons research, the existence of the Young-Elders within Hydebank confirms that it is possible for transitional expressions of masculinity to exist within prison institutions. The existence of Young-Elders certifies that these dominant expressions can be challenged within hyper-masculine environments. Progressing forward this thesis argues that the existence of the Young-Elders can provide the foundations of knowledge for addressing perceptions of masculinity within prison environments.

9.5 Research Limitations

Upon completing the study, and reflecting on the research process, the researcher acknowledges that there are some limitations of the research. Firstly, the researcher made a conscious decision at the beginning of the fieldwork to distance himself from the prison officers in Hydebank. This was due to a number of early interactions with the young men where they questioned his role and the purpose of the research. The researcher felt that the young men would not be as open and honest with him if he came to be associated with the prison officers in the institution. As a result, although some interviews were conducted with prison staff and the researcher frequently spent time talking to them in the prison, upon completion of the research, the researcher recognises that the thesis would have benefitted from a higher level of staff perspective. However, the researcher does maintain his belief that spending more time with the staff would have been detrimental to the relationships he built with the young men.

Secondly, upon completion of writing the thesis the researcher feels that he could have made more use of the substantial body of fieldnotes that he collated during the observational research in Hydebank. The findings sections of this thesis

are largely supported by the quotations from the interviews, with the notes from the observations featuring relatively rarely. He felt that the interview comments provided stronger evidence for the findings sections, however going forward the researcher hopes to include observations more in future publications.

Thirdly, the researcher did not spend any time in the visitor centre in Hydebank. Spending time in the centre would have undoubtedly advanced the findings of the thesis, providing the research with an insight into how the young men interacted with loved ones, including children. However, again it was a personal decision not to enter the centre. After spending such a large amount of time with many of the young men in Hydebank and through discussions with them it was evident that the centre was a special place where prisoners spent time with friends and family, the researcher could not bring himself to set foot in the visitor centre and watch in this environment. He felt that if he did enter the centre he would move out of Gold's (1958: 217) two intermediary definitions of participant observation and into the category of 'complete observer', which he felt shared elements of voyeurism. It is worth noting here that the researcher is not critical of research that is conducted in visitor centres, he just felt uncomfortable conducting research in the centre given the nature of the relationship he had built with many of the young men.

9.6 Future research

Throughout this thesis, it has been highlighted that there exists a violent, dominant and aggressive expression of masculinity within Hydebank. While it has been argued that this expression of masculinity was largely contributed to by wider NI societal issues, the masculine nature of imprisonment, and the deprivations associated with it, may exacerbate and heighten hyper-masculine expressions of masculinity within the institution. This study has highlighted that the prison is a microcosm of society with its own set of morals and values especially relevant in regards to prisoners (also see Morris and Morris, 1963; Giallombardo, 1966; Sykes, 1958). Bearing in mind research explored before, such as Messerschmidt's (1993) 'doing masculinity', examinations into prison culture imply that masculine characteristics become magnified within the prison system and 'macho' characteristics can become embedded in male prisoners (Mosher and Sirkin, 1984). This encourages male displays of bravado, earning dominance and respect through violence, toughness and

dismissal of emotion (Evans and Wallace, 2008). For many prisoners individual status and peer group respect is judged upon an individual's ability to physically protect himself, access resources and generate fear from other prisoners. However, transitional expressions of masculinity can be adopted within prison. This thesis proposes examining the impact of the varying expressions of masculinity found within prison on the post-prison resettlement process.

Prisoner resettlement is one of the principal aims of the CJS (MoJ, 2014). Successful resettlement provides the offender with the required skills and resources to effectively move away from a life that is reliant on crime (Harkins et al., 2011). Without this support “the released offender confronts a situation at release that virtually ensures his failure” (McArthur, 1974: 1). Successful resettlement is one of the most effective methods of reducing crime and recidivism, a lack of support in this area results in many individuals falling back into criminality (Howard League, 2011). It is clear that within NI the process of resettlement is insufficient. Continually high levels of recidivism signal that programmes addressing the area are ineffective. In NI, the one year proven reoffending rate for those released from custody was 38.2 (DoJNI, 2017). In addition to this, 72 percent of male sentenced prisoners, from within NI, suffer from two or more mental disorders upon their release with 75 percent struggling with dual-diagnosis, a combination of mental health problems and alcohol or drug misuse (Prison Reform Trust, 2010). Therefore, it is clear that difficulties surrounding resettlement stretch further than just unsuccessful desistance from crime.

Research regarding resettlement generally focuses on contrasting theories that examine the difficulties that offenders face upon release from prison, such as unemployment (Niven and Stewart, 2005), low levels of financial capital (Rowlingson et al., 1997), substance abuse (Kothari et al., 2002) and problems securing accommodation (Prison Reform Trust, 2010). Other theories specifically focus on the process of moving away from criminality, focusing on an individual's capability of desisting from crime: Laub and Sampson (2003) argue specific moments occur in offenders' lives that initiate a transition away from a life of criminality; and theorists such as Maruna (2001) place more emphasis on cognitive transformations that accompany the process of desistance. Desistance literature argues that upon release from prison, individuals progress away from criminality because of a combination of factors. Integral to desistance is the development of a

non-criminal identity in conjunction with a significant life-altering event such as a new form of employment, the formation of strong family ties or a new relationship (Sampson and Laub, 2005; Uggen and Wakefield, 2008). The creation of this non-criminal identity, which often “takes the form of the ‘good parent’, ‘provider’ or ‘family man’” (Le Bel et al., 2008: 137), quite often draws deep parallels to characteristics of traditional expressions of masculinity found in wider society. However, rarely are masculinities explored in relation to desistance (Carlsson, 2013). This is surprising considering a common denominator within all research surrounding desistance and resettlement is that it overwhelmingly focuses on male offenders (Maruna, 2001; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Mc Neill, 2006).

Therefore, in terms of future research, this thesis proposes research into how expressions of masculinity found within the prison setting can affect the post-prison process and the impacts of this on successful prisoner resettlement. Research in this area would address a distinct lack of understanding of the role of masculinities in the post-prison process, thus providing a significant original contribution to knowledge.

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